25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

The Washington Monthly

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Marjorie Williams on Gidget and the Bionic Woman

A convicted child molester makes the case for castration

John Morton Blum on Henry Kissinger

How the government brought milkshakes to the African desert

THINK LITTLE ROCK IS CORRUPTING WASHINGTON?
Think Again

There's more high-dollar back-scratching in our national capital than small-town Southerners ever dreamed of

By Jon Meacham

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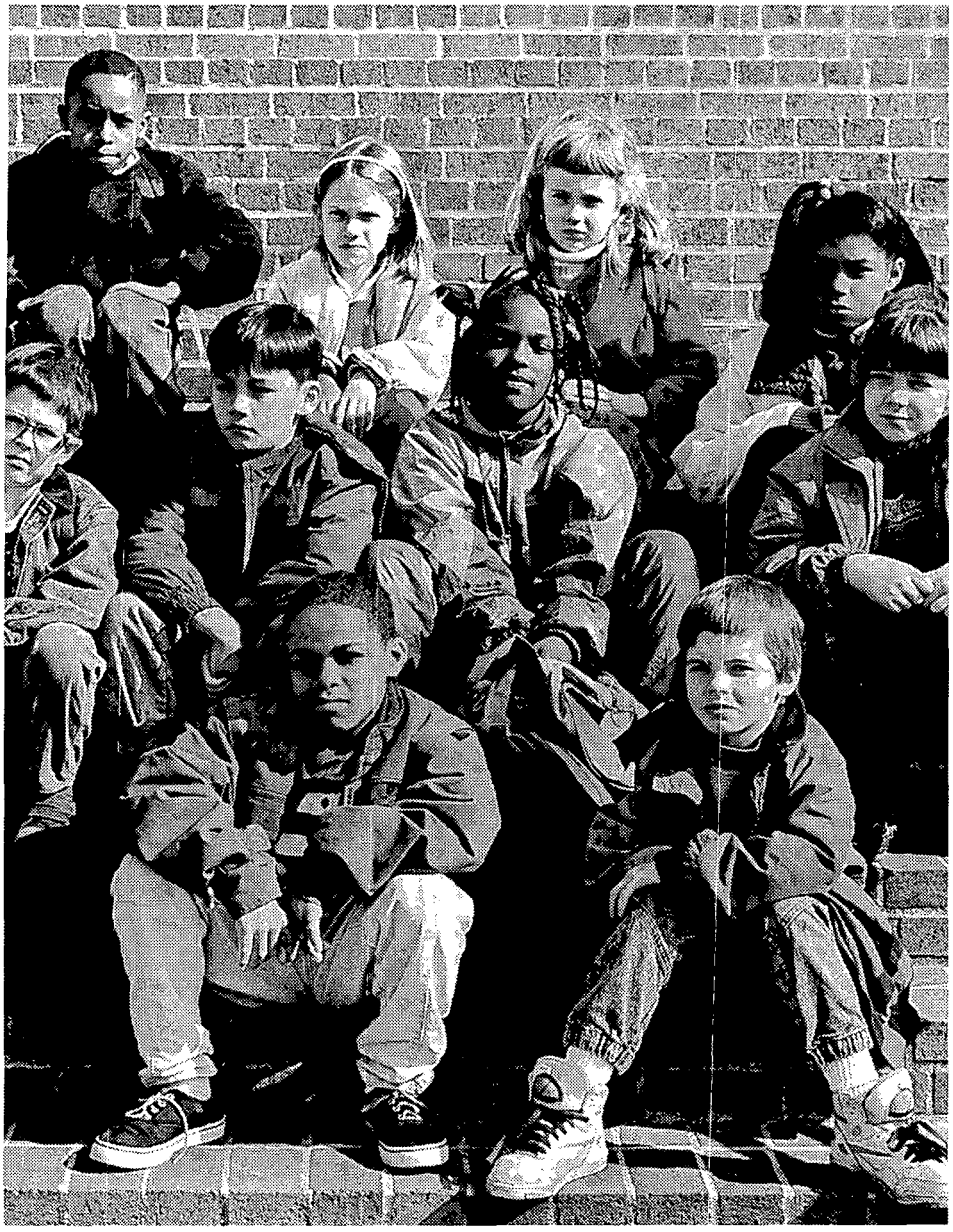

"Nearly one fourth of America's public school students say they have been **the victims of** an act of **violence** in or around school."

—*The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 1993: Violence in America's Public Schools*

An epidemic of violence seems to be sweeping America's schools. Where gum-chewing and talking in class used to be serious problems, one now hears of students and teachers alike being robbed or shot or stabbed.

How big is the problem, really? How much of it is media hype? Where does it happen most? How does it affect education? What causes it? How can it be controlled?

To help examine these and other critical questions, MetLife commissioned the research firm of Louis Harris & Associates to interview over two thousand teachers, students and law enforcement officials on the subject of violence in America's schools.

The results of this survey are yours for the asking. We published them not to moralize or suggest remedies, but to provide you with a foundation of informed opinion upon which remedial action can be formulated.

The MetLife Survey of the Americ Teacher 1993: Violence in America's Public Schools is the most recent in a decade-long series of surveys sponsored by MetLife. You may obtain a summary of the findings, without cos by writing to MetLife Teachers' Surve 1993, PO Box 807, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159-0807.

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The Washington Monthly

Volume 26, Number Five May 1994

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Letters

Good Health

Your "What Hillary Could Learn From Canada and Germany" [March] was on the mark. The single payer plan is the only way to go.

So why doesn't the U.S. simply join the Canadian plan? Send Canada a check to cover the 200 million of us. They even have the forms already. We could call it the AmeriCan Plan.

Anything less than single payer will be a lawyers' paradise.

William Finnigan
Cornwall, NY

Gramm Stands

David Segal wrote a good article on Senator Gramm ["The *Real* Leader of the Opposition," March], but he went too far when he said Gramm is unwilling to pay a political price in order to balance the budget. The Gramm-Rudman law would've cut the sugar subsidy, and that surely will hurt Gramm in Florida when he runs for president. The Gramm-Rudman law would also have cut the FBI budget in half. Surely the conservatives who vote for Gramm in Texas do not like that, and how can Gramm run for president when his opponents will call him "The man who wants to cut the FBI in half"?

Gramm has done cowardly things, but he isn't a coward all the time.

Douglas Sczygelski
Dayton, OH

I am convinced that if Phil Gramm drafted a policy paper on all subjects, from foreign policy to health care, delivered it to Bill Clinton, and Clinton adopted the policy word for word, Gramm would then oppose it.

Your comparison to Richard Nixon is also accurate. I think Gramm is Nixon looking for a chance to repeat himself. He wants to be president so bad he'll do anything.

He *is* popular here in Texas. As an attorney, I use jury questionnaires from time to time. A surprising number of potential jurors list Phil Gramm as the person that they most admire. It proves to me that image and sound bites are everything.

I do not know what will happen, but someday, Gramm will do something wrong that all will see and you will be able to stand and say, "I told you so!"

Richard A. Henderson
Fort Worth, TX

Work Fair

Mickey Kaus ["Give Everyone a Job," March] argues for government to launch a large-scale public works hiring program, arguing that "you can't 'end welfare as we know it' by relying on private enterprise." We could achieve the same objectives with more cost-effective use of tax dollars by using private sector management and its need for efficiency.

Rather than pay perhaps $4 per hour for government to hire welfare recipients and incur huge overhead costs, paying private employers $2 to $3 per hour (or even more if necessary) to hire the long-term unemployed would demand quality work from program participants, with subsidies incrementally phased out. This would introduce participants to the realities of private sector employment, eliminating problems of moving people to the private sector from government make-work jobs (where laziness or mediocre work would be tolerated).

Of course, such private sector incentives could be offered as an *adjunct* to government hiring programs rather than as a substitute for them.

Thomas O'Brian
Charlottesville, VA

Laugh In

I am seriously contemplating filing a suit for damages after reading "The Washington Monthly, 2019." [Gregg Easterbrook, March] I laughed so hard I hurt myself.

William Hinton Best III
Arlington, VA

Canada Try

Why are we so afraid of socialized medicine? We are the only country in the civilized world that doesn't have it in some form. As a matter of fact, a large segment of our population already has coverage provided by the government, and has had it

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all along. I am speaking of the military, of course, active duty and retired.

As a retired military type with service-connected disabilities, I have had socialized medicine since I entered the Air Force in 1941, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Whether I need a bottle of aspirin or major surgery, I can go to a military hospital or Veterans Administration medical facility, plop down my health card, and everything is taken care of. No paperwork, no fuss, no bother, and the care is as good as you will get anywhere. I have paid for this over the years, of course, since health care is considered to be part of a GI's salary, but I would be willing to pay a value-added tax of 10 percent, or whatever it takes, so that everyone would have the same benefits that I have. Everyone would share in the system and everyone would help pay for it.

Seems to me that any employer would welcome such a plan. Most of our labor unrest occurs because workers are bargaining for better health benefits. One of the largest costs of doing business is health insurance. Imagine how many billions of dollars would be freed up for plant expansion and raises for workers if business didn't have to provide insurance. The only ones opposed would be the insurance companies, as you can tell by the TV ads.

The Canadians, of course, have such a system, and a recent poll indicated that 95 percent of the people were well-satisfied with it. I expect if a similar poll were taken of veterans, a like percentage would result.

John W. Slayton
Roanoke, VA

Privatize the Police

The cops will tell you they have to wait to perform their respective duties, but I'd say Charles Peters was dead bang right in his observation about police standing around at crime scenes ["Tilting at Windmills," April]. Parades can be even worse for goldbricking.

But the answer isn't rules for who stands where and with whom. Instead, just make policing accountable for customers, like most other services. You can do that with competitive contracting.

Communities should routinely take bids on police services, and select and renew contracts based on cost, obviously, and on performance: How quick are the responses? How many criminals are caught or cases solved? How often is the evidence accepted in court? How fast is stolen property retrieved and returned? How decently do the cops treat the citizens? Familiarity would affect performance, thus you wouldn't expect to see willy-nilly turnover of contractors. The home team could use the competing proposals as benchmarks for improving itself, as is being done in other public services.

Although security functions are increasingly being privatized, there's an arrest and use-of-force problem in not using sworn duty officers, so let's say we limit our contracting to formal police agencies. They could compete for business in neighboring or nearby jurisdictions. (Sheriffs already do this for small municipalities.) Police work is one of the most mobile of public services: It consists of street patrols (cops who often don't live where they work anyway) reporting by radiowave to a central facility that holds dispatchers, labs, hard-file records, and detention. What difference does it make whether that building is within the boundaries of the community being served?

Tim Ferguson
Los Angeles, CA

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Tilting at Windmills

In America in the 1950s, Christopher Buckley points out in his new novel *Thank You For Smoking*, "At the height of its industrial and imperial power, men drank double martinis for lunch." Could it be the boldness that built the American Imperium was fueled by booze? Was it that second martini that gave the boss the courage to say "Let's build another plant" or "Let's open an office in L.A."? . . .

Speaking of the fifties, in 1959 I ordered a black-and-white checked cotton gingham suit for my wife from Best's, which was then one of the Fifth Avenue stores in New York. It cost $15. The other day she showed me a page from a Saks catalog advertising a suit that appeared identical in every way except for the price, which was $318. This is typical of what has happened to the prices of women's clothing. Like the costs of higher education and medical care, they have soared far beyond the inflation rate. Is it because working women can pay more than the housewives of the fifties? If you have a theory, let me know. . . .

Since it is not in the nature of a law firm either to let the public know it has overbilled clients or to betray sources of power and influence, I can think of only two possible reasons why the boys at Rose blew the whistle on Webb Hubbell. One is that a Republican member of the firm leaked the alleged overbilling news to the press, and the rest of the partners worried that they would then appear to be guilty of concealing an ethics violation if they failed to report it to the state bar themselves. Another is that the partners think the reputation of the Clinton administration has headed so far south that their connection with Hubbell—and with the Clintons—is doing them more harm than good. . . .

The *Monthly* continues to view Whitewater as a snipe hunt, but unfortunately a snipe hunt to which the Clintons' defensive reaction has revealed some unhappy aspects of the presidential couple's character.

For example, those of us who had thought of the First Lady as the president's wisest counselor saw that she gave him perfectly terrible advice when she advocated stonewalling. Furthermore, just as the First Couple has held power too close, contributing to the chronic tentativeness of their subordinates that I have previously deplored in this space, on Whitewater the Clintons held too many facts too close to their vest for too long, making the staff visibly nervous about what might still be hidden. And Mrs. Clinton's shortage of humor, as well as the president's, and for that matter chief aide George Stephanopoulos', deprived the White House of one of its most effective ways of defusing Whitewater, which was to make fun of the media's tendency to make mountains out of molehills in order to justify the effort and money they devote to a story. The White House has a right to resent the press overplaying the story, but the Clintons and their staff could have ridiculed the mountain while gracefully acknowledging that, yes, there is a Whitewater molehill, thus appearing forthcoming, reasonable, and charming amid the din of the press' indignation. . . .

I guess what worries me the most about the Clinton-Stephanopoulos humor shortage is that people who lack humor also often lack a healthy sense of self-criticism. Really good humor requires that the humorist be able to laugh at himself, and you can't laugh at yourself unless you're willing to acknowledge your own shortcomings. . . .

For me the low point in the media's coverage of Whitewater came with the April 4 issues of both *Time* and *Newsweek*. The latter has already corrected its report that Hillary Clinton did not use her own money to finance her speculation in cattle futures.

But *Time* has yet to apologize for its misleading cover photograph of a depressed and concerned George Stephanopoulos and Bill Clinton in the Oval Office. Although the picture had been taken months before on a routine White House day, the cover implies that it depicts a president and his aide agonizing over that week's reports about Stephanopoulos' conversations with Treasury aides about the hiring of Jay Stephens by the RTC.

The first paragraph of the accompanying story, by George

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Church and Michael Kramer, contained this allegation: "Fiske's probers, *Time* has learned, are weighing charges that White House aides tried—though unsuccessfully—to force the firing of [Stephens]." The article goes on to ominously refer to Section 1505 of Title 18 of the U.S. Code and to the possibility that "At least one and perhaps several indictments could result in imprisonment as long as five years." The evidence to support this allegation is that Stephanopoulos and Harold Ickes blew up when they heard that Stephens, the Republican former U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, had been appointed to a job in which he would have an opportunity to do serious damage to the president and his wife.

Ickes and Stephanopoulos had good reason to be concerned about Stephens, who held a press conference in 1993 denouncing Clinton for firing him even though that's what every new president does to every U.S. attorney of the opposite party. Evidence that Ickes and Stephanopoulos tried to "force" a Stephens dismissal does not, to the best of my knowledge, exist. All the two White House aides did was express outrage—wouldn't you have done the same in their position?—and ask if Stephens *could* be fired. When they were told he couldn't, they dropped the matter. . . .

The excessive coverage of Whitewater may have climaxed with those *Time-Newsweek* stories. The media's embarrassment may have something to do with it, but I suspect a larger factor is that the drop in the stock and bond markets reminded reporters, editors, and producers that there are more important subjects than Whitewater. They may be indifferent to health care because they all have generous health insurance, but most of the now-affluent members of the media have investment portfolios. Another possible explanation is that the week following the *Time-Newsweek* stories, the White House press corps accompanied the president on his San Diego vacation. So when they weren't anxiously conferring on the phone with their brokers, they were forgetting their troubles in the sun and fun of the Del Coronado Hotel, where Marilyn Monroe cavorted with Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in *Some Like it Hot*. There just wasn't much time left for Whitewater. . . .

Have you ever noticed how TV interviewees always express appreciation to the interviewers? The "Thank you, Mr. Secretary" is always followed by "Thank *you*, Larry." Doesn't this suggest that the interviewee, instead of thinking of himself as providing information, sees the interview as an opportunity for publicity for which he should be warmly grateful? . . .

Some years ago, I wrote that if you doubted civil servants were capable of passionate concern, you should try to take away their free parking. The latest illustration of this truth is the IRS, which has managed to figure out how to exempt its officials from a tax on parking that was passed by Congress in 1992. The tax is supposed to be payable when the value of the parking is greater than $155 a month. Indoor parking in the vicinity of the IRS building costs about $300. So how did the gang at the IRS get out of this one? According to David Rosenbaum of *The New York Times,* they determined the worth of a parking space on the basis of the "rent" the agency pays the General Services Administration, another federal agency that acts as the government's landlord and, to put it gently, sometimes fails to drive the hardest bargain. Since the true value of the space is $300, each IRS official who profits from this ruling will be cheating the government out of $626 in taxes. If the IRS cheats, why shouldn't the rest of us?

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If that doesn't make your blood boil, consider this: Congress, having heard about the IRS' scheme, decided to value its own free parking at $155, thus exempting itself from taxation as well. . . .

Some new entries in our Safe Answers contest. These are for public officials threatened with indictment: "Cooperating fully" and "Do not recall." . . .

Maybe single payer has a chance after all. It has been endorsed by *The Seattle Post Intelligencer*, *The Detroit Free Press*, and *The Atlanta Constitution*. *The New York Times* finally gave it sympathetic treatment in a front page story by Robin Toner in March. And in its March 21 issue, *Business Week* came close to endorsing single payer in an article subtitled, "A Canadian-style plan would preserve bedrock U.S. principles—and it may be the cheapest approach." Of course, this good news had to be accompanied by some negative opinions about single payer. What is interesting is that the most influentially positioned of these, an op-ed piece by Robert Berenson in *The New York Times*, argued that a *weakness* of the Canadian system is that it permits free choice of doctor.

Berenson also argues that the Canadian system wouldn't work with overspecialized American physicians who are petrified of malpractice suits. The solution, though, isn't to reject the Canadian system, but to radically reduce overspecialization and malpractice litigation.

In case you've forgotten, the *Monthly* has an answer to both these problems. As for overspecialization, we would have the government refuse loans to medical students who want to specialize and make the monthly loan payments for those who opt to be family and primary care physicians. As for malpractice, we would eliminate pain-and-suffering damages—the big ticket item in these suits—in return for doctors allowing laymen to sit on licensing boards. This way, the one legitimate function of harsh malpractice verdicts will still be performed: namely, punishing incompetent physicians, which the boards can do by revoking their licenses—an act doctor-dominated boards are far too reluctant to perform. . . .

Why haven't they always done that is the question you have to ask yourself after reading two recent headlines: "CIA to Require Employees to File Financial Disclosures" and "Past Performance Becomes a Factor in U.S. Contracts" . . . .

I'm a real old maid about gambling—or, to be more precise, about government actively encouraging it, as the District of Columbia does with glitzy ads for its lottery. The latest disillusionment comes from Iowa. As Edward Walsh recently pointed out in *The Washington Post*, here was the scene of *The Music Man*, which is dearly loved by all us sentimentalists for capturing what was good and wonderful in the America of the midwestern small town. Now the Iowa legislature is locked in bitter debate over whether to allow slot machines at racetracks. That's right, they want to subject the poor sucker who has lost his bankroll on the races to being fleeced of his pocket change by one-armed bandits. . . .

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LOOKING AT THE SUN
The Rise of the New East Asian Economic and Political System

PANTHEON AT BOOKSTORES EVERYWHERE

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Speaking of state legislatures, one of their most enduring rituals is the custom of relaxing through the early days of the session and then getting much of the work done at the very end. In the most recent 60-day session of the West Virginia legislature, for example, of the 190 bills passed, 65 were passed on the last day. There is a method in this madness. The leaders know that on the last day they can bring up bills without anywhere near enough time for adequate debate. So this is when mining companies get exempted from regulation and tax breaks for special interests are enacted. Lobbyists love this system because it means they only have to bribe the leaders and not waste their largess on lowly backbenchers. . . .

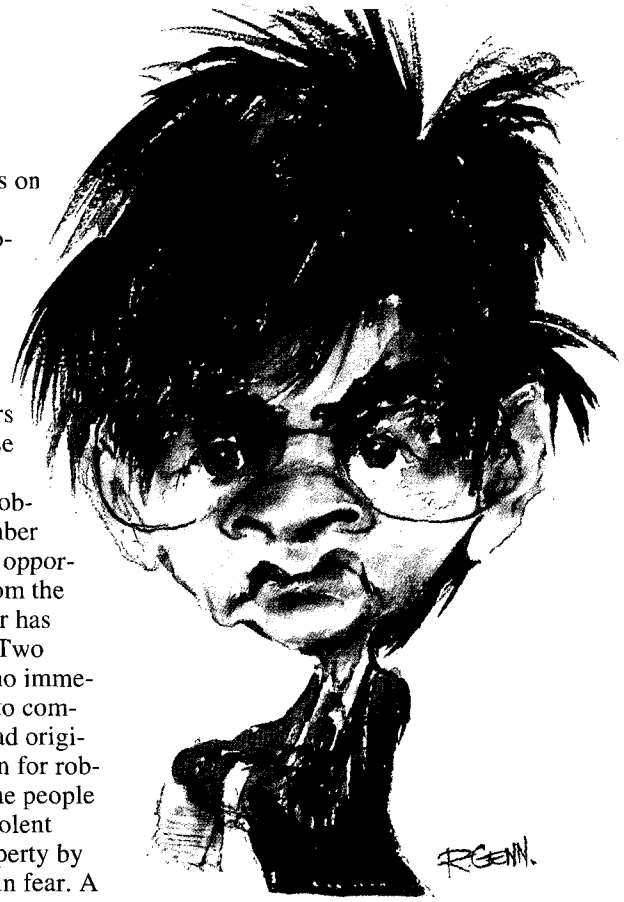
Does the right have a new agenda for Asia? Suspicions were aroused by a recent *Washington Times* map which depicts Afghanistan at three or four times its actual size and leaves Pakistan out entirely. . . .

Trying to find where conservatives and liberals can agree is of increasing interest to me. If we are to take the excessive acrimony out of political discussions, we need to find the common ground on which liberals and conservatives can build mutual respect. A hard line on violent crime seems to be one. Others include the need to encourage enterpreneurship and to teach values in school. For more examples, see Charlotte Allen's article on page 10. . . .

Speaking of crime and ideology, the lesson of the Willie Horton case should be that the Republicans were wrong to play the race card but right to ridicule the kind of softness on crime that permits early release of violent convicts. The latest example is New York's work-release program, in which the number of prisoners sent to work-release centers has tripled since 1989. The problem is that the number who have used the opportunity to escape from the work-release center has increased tenfold. Two recent escapees who immediately proceeded to commit other crimes had originally been in prison for robbery which, as some people don't know, is a violent crime—taking property by putting the victim in fear. A robber, then, is not a mere shoplifter but someone who pulls a knife or a gun on you. Nevertheless, the New York work-release program put the robbers back on the streets where they robbed again, one of them shooting a cabdriver in the process.

It's interesting to note why so many violent criminals had to be put into work-release. According to Mireya Navarro of *The New York Times*, "The pressure to release inmates in New York and elsewhere has mounted as the cumulative impact of tougher sentences for drug-offenders is felt."

So the conservatives who rave about Willie Horton being on the streets may in fact be the very people who put him there. Why? Because in the eighties many of these same conservatives supported draconian anti-drug laws that resulted in lengthy prison terms for the non-violent crimes of possession or sale of narcotics. . . .



Humorless George

Back to the martinis and the American Empire for a moment. I have often wondered about the role gin and vermouth played in the triumphs and tragedies of the CIA. Accounts of life in the agency, such as *Night Watch* by David Phillips, make frequent references to alcoholic lunches at restaurants such as Napoleon and La Nicoise. Would the Bay of Pigs have happened if the fellows had just ordered a soda? . . .

By the way, the *Los Angeles Times* estimates that the CIA's "secret" budget is $30 billion a year. Yet it took them eight years to catch Aldrich Ames, who was driving into the agency's parking lot in a Jaguar he couldn't afford and returning at night to a house he couldn't afford, either. . . .

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I was delighted by the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Montana law abolishing the insanity defense. I realize that insanity is only used in a tiny number of cases. Still, it has long been a symbol of how the affluent who can afford clever lawyers, as John Hinckley's family could, are able to evade punishment for their crimes. When I practiced criminal law, it occurred to me that most of my clients were at least a little bit nuts. That doesn't mean they weren't guilty of the criminal acts they were alleged to have performed. What it should mean is that after guilt is determined, the mental state of the accused should be taken into account in determining the nature of his punishment. If he needs psychiatric treatment, try to give it to him. But first and foremost, make sure he is confined long enough to protect society from a repetition of violent behavior. . . .

In her new book, *Living a Political Life*, Madeline Kunin, the undersecretary of Education and former governor of Vermont, makes this observation about what motivates a life devoted to public affairs:

"The optimistic illusion that one can change the world is difficult to resist, especially when from time to time that illusion is sustained by even a hint of reality."

I feel the same way, but sometimes it's hard to find even that hint of impact. After we published Richard Reeves' article last month arguing that we should stop wasting disaster benefits on people who choose to live in disaster-prone areas, especially if they are affluent enough to really choose where they live, Congress rejected a law that would have at least reduced construction in the most vulnerable parts of the coastline. Instead, the solons postponed action and called for a two-year study. . . .

My main worry about health reform is that the Clintons will sacrifice effective cost control in order to get the bill through Congress. If you have ever been involved with the legislative process, you know how tempting it is to do anything that will get a bill enacted so that your team can brag that "we got the bill passed." In the cases of national service and student loans, the administration has shown that it is willing to compromise crucial elements of a program in order to get a bill. If it does the same with health reform and tries, say, to achieve universal coverage without performing radical surgery on costs, the result could be a fiscal catastrophe . . . .

Did you know that the Department of Agriculture spends about $2 million on security clearance for its employees? HUD spends about $850,000, the Department of Commerce more than $1 million. Why do their employees need security clearances? How can the government be so insane as to underinvestigate real security risks, such as CIA and Department of Defense employees, while it wastes millions investigating people who will have no access to real secrets? . . .

HOSTAGES of EACH OTHER

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Buried in a recent *Wall Street Journal* article about Aldrich Ames and his wife while they were serving in Mexico were these clues to the hardships our foreign services endure:

"They lived a swank life of the diplomatic set: Housing allowances, expense accounts and long lunches at the bistros and cafes across the street from the embassy.

"Rick Ames' cozy book-lined apartment was in the "Pink Zone," an elegant diplomatic quarter of palm gardens behind pink stucco walls.

"Weekends often brought trips, sometimes to vineyards and other spots in the hills, sponsored by the diplomatic club where he first met Ms. Casas. The office of the Mexican president sometimes provided a passenger jet for longer trips, such as those to the beaches of Acapulco and the ruins of the Yucatan." . . .

When the judge resisted Leslie Abramson's request for $250,000 to represent Erik Menendez in his second trial after she had already gotten $650,000 plus several million dollars' worth of free publicity courtesy of Court TV, Abramson was able to get five prominent defense lawyers to say her request was not unusual.

Accustomed as we are to this kind of moral leadership from the bar, the good news is that the number of applicants to law schools has dropped by 11 percent in the last three years. The bad news is that there are still enough people who want to go to law school to fill the 41,000 places available. Even worse: By the year 2000, the nation will have 1 million lawyers. . . .

Finally, we agree with the recent articles in *The New Republic* and in *Newsweek* calling for good orphanages as a solution to the problem of abused and neglected children. Lois Forer made the same case in these pages in our April 1988 issue.

I know there really are such things as good orphanages, because I grew up three blocks from one and went to school with children who lived there. It was called the Davis Child Shelter and was run by the Reverend Ronald Cleland and his wife. Their sons, Don and Charlie, were reared as friends of the other children in the home. When one of the Davis kids was run over by a car and killed, all of us in his fifth-grade class at Mercer School attended the funeral. . . .

—*Charles Peters*

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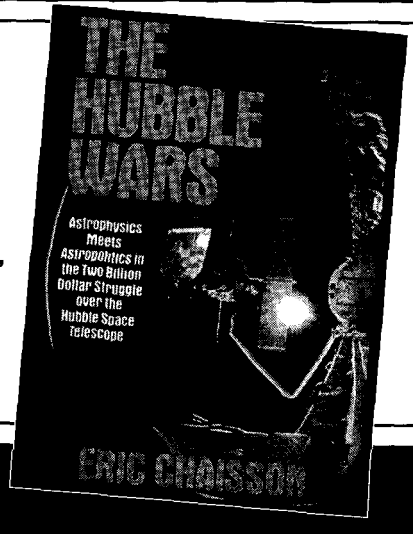

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Why Don't Republicans Hate Disney's America?

On a whole range of issues, conservatives and liberals should be standing together

BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN

In late December, the Walt Disney Company announced a plan to build an American history theme park in Haymarket, Virginia, a rural town of 500 just beyond the cordon of fake-farmhouse tract developments, glass-towered office parks, and shopping strips that make up the suburbs of Washington, D.C. "Disney's America" is scheduled to occupy 3,000 acres of land and has a certain grotesque irony about it—not the least of which is the fact that the Washington area burgeons with landmarks of *real* American history, including the Civil War's Manassas battlefield a few miles away. Disney promises that the park's attractions will generate as many as 19,000 new jobs—of the low-paying, transient-attracting, tourist-service variety. But far from needing the work, the Haymarket area is already prosperous on a modest scale, and metropolitan Washington in general has the nation's highest per-capita living standard. Worst of all, Disney, a multibillion dollar corporation that almost never fails to turn a profit, expects the commonwealth of Virginia (that is, its taxpayers) to underwrite part of the theme park's costs, shelling out $163.2 million to build roads, train employees, and even advertise the attraction.

Big spending, government entwinement in private enterprise, and the certain destruction of all that is left in Northern Virginia of a traditional, family-and-church-centered, rural way of life—sounds like political liberalism at its overbearing worst. However, Disney's America's biggest booster is no liberal but Virginia's new Republican governor, George Allen, who ran for office in 1993 on a conservative platform of old-fashioned morality and fiscal restraint. When Allen talks about Haymarket, though, he doesn't talk about anything resembling conserving. He talks growth. He talks progress. "Disney's America can and will be the first step in Virginia's renaissance," he told state legislators early this year.

Allen's rhetoric is typical of those whom we call "conservatives" in America these days, or at least of the conservatives who figure prominently in politics and the media. Conservatives are supposed to stand for a love of tradition—hence

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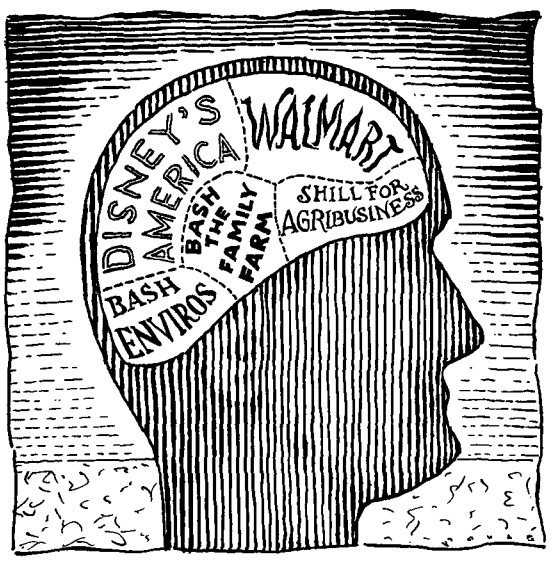
their name—and also for a suspicion of government.

Protecting the environment, for example, ought to be a conservative cause. The Republican president and WASP aristocrat Theodore Roosevelt practically invented the word "conservation." But most conservatives nowadays call conservationists "tree huggers" and make fun of endangered species. Conservatives ought to champion propriety and good manners. Yet *The Wall Street Journal*'s conservative editorial writers have taken up the cause of Ewart Yearwood, the Swarthmore College student in trouble with school authorities for allegedly making a pest of himself around a female freshman.



What's on a conservative's mind

Robert Soulé

Country squire George Washington, perhaps the most conservative of the Founding Fathers, cautioned the country in his Farewell Address to avoid entangling herself in foreign wars except in "extraordinary emergencies." Most of today's conservatives ignore this counsel and instead promote an aggressively interventionist U.S. foreign policy reminiscent of Wilsonian do-gooder Democratic internationalism. Indeed, the former Reagan administration official and current Republican presidential hopeful William Bennett edited Washington's mind-your-own-business sentiments right out of the version of the Farewell Address he included in his Gibraltar-size tome *The Book of Virtues*.

And how about that incubator of hard work, thrift, and other Bennett-touted virtues—the family farm? The view of today's conservatives: plow it under. "I was at an American Enterprise Institute thing where someone said, 'Maybe we just don't need family farms anymore; we've progressed beyond them,'" recalls Gary Dorrien, author of *The Neoconservative Mind*. "I've never heard anything so un-conservative in my life."

Although they talk a great deal about personal responsibility and ethics, most of today's conservatives refuse to support the traditional social and economic arrangements—small towns, extended families, generational roots, secure livelihoods, and respect for the land—that create the stability in which a sense of duty to others thrives. Instead, conservatives function as shills for big business and, as if America weren't already the most prosperous country on Earth, "growth"—a perpetual frenzy of economic development designed to make life ever more expensive and transform people into slaves of consumption. Then conservatives wring their hands and castigate the "Hollywood elite" for turning young people into illiterate MTV-heads—as if everyone in Hollywood weren't working for the very capitalistic enterprises that conservatives otherwise commend.

All this should change. Just as there are "neoliberals" who find common ground with conservatives on such issues as crime and entrepreneurship, there ought to be conservatives who take up causes we now associate strictly with liberals. Among them: environmental protection, stopping the drug war, saving the family farm, and rooting out consumerism. Figuring out a name for this new conservative movement will be difficult ("neoconservatism" has already been taken), but it deserves attention nonetheless.

So far, that attention has not come from conservatives themselves. "There's a certain Philis-

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tine streak among them," observes Philip Terzian, a conservative columnist for the *Providence Journal.* Thus, although conservatives fret about America's moral decline (which they blame on a leftish "adversary culture" of influential intellectuals), in order to find a serious moral critique of the state of current society you have to turn to a socialist such as the late Christopher Lasch. "Our growing dependence on technologies no one seems to understand or control has given rise to feelings of powerlessness and victimization," Lasch wrote in a 1990 afterword to his famous 1979 book, *The Culture of Narcissism.* "We find it more and more difficult to achieve a sense of continuity, permanence, or connection with the world around us," continued Lasch. "Relationships with others are notably fragile; goods are made to be used up and discarded; reality is experienced as an unstable environment of flickering images."

The Bush presidential campaign in 1992 made family values a rhetorical linchpin, but it was Bill Clinton who actually appeared to be doing something for parents and children when he pushed a federal family leave law through Congress soon after taking office.

"The leftist critique of modernism is OK, even if you agree with none of the left's answers," says Chilton Williamson of *Chronicles* magazine, a paleoconservative monthly. "The right can't face the fact of environmental degradation and the enormous power of corporations. The left—they're self-righteous and self-serving in their critique, but that doesn't mean they aren't right."

Nonetheless, genuine conservatives ought to be willing to confront phony conservatism, if only to keep liberals from always seizing the high ground. For example, the Bush presidential campaign in 1992 made family values a rhetorical linchpin, but it was Bill Clinton who actually appeared to be doing something for parents and children when he pushed a federal family leave law through Congress soon after taking office last year.

The law was arguably a mistake, and it certainly represented big government at its most heavy-handed (it overrode a plethora of state laws already requiring employers to grant unpaid leave for pregnancy and family illnesses). But you never heard any of the Republicans who opposed the federal leave law suggest that employers might have a *moral* if not a legal obligation to allow mothers to stay home with newborn or sick children without losing badly needed jobs. That argument—an appeal to private compassion and to reciprocal loyalties between employer and employee rather than to written rules—would have made business interests (and most liberals) queasy, but it would have represented a genuinely conservative way to shore up families.

Conservatives by all rights should be defenders of traditional communities, from black churches to urban ethnic enclaves. Nonetheless, it is liberals who have appropriated both the word "communitarian" and the votes of working-class people who are deeply conservative on social issues but fret about their livelihoods. All that movement conservatives have to say to blue-collar blacks and ethnics is: Not to worry. If NAFTA takes away your job or your farm, that's the "creative destruction" that makes capitalism work over the long run.

The reason for the disjuncture between what conservatives call themselves and what they believe is that there is very little about American conservatism nowadays that would be recognizable as conservative anywhere else. For example, Edmund Burke, the benchmark philosopher of English-speaking conservatism, would have been horrified at the very idea of creative destruction. "A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views," he wrote in *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* Burke cherished individual liberty, but he saw it as the glorious end-product of a civilized society that could en-

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force its mores by long-held convention and custom rather than by coercion. Burke viewed people's obligations toward each other not in legalistic terms but in terms of "fealty"—mutual duties that bind people of every social class into "little platoons" of immediate and personal loyalties.

Deeply conservative strands also run through American society, from its rural and small-town communities to the family-centered immigrant cultures that fill its cities. But America also has the Republican Party, with its strong pro-business tilt that sometimes, but not always, coincides with real conservatism. The Cold War reconciled conservatives to big government via the defense buildup, and it also brought in waves of neoconservatives: welfare-state Democrats and even ex-Marxists disenchanted with the left's softness on Soviet totalitarianism. Pushed to the margin were the paleoconservatives—Southern agrarians and others. And many paleos have their own imagined governmental and technological fixes for social problems: immigration curbs and population control, to name a few. Thus, with American movement conservatism of every stripe in philosophical disarray, it is not surprising that genuine conservatives often find more to their liking in *The Nation* than in *National Review*.

So what's a real conservative to do? The answer: align with or at least talk to liberals on issues that the left has adopted but that more properly belong to the right. Here is a partial list of genuine conservative causes that movement conservatives ignore:

➤ ***The environment***. Conservatives tend to be wary of environmentalism, and rightly so, for it often translates into snarls of federal regulation. However, there is nothing "conservative" about polluting the air and water and destroying the habitats of animals and birds. Nor is conservation necessarily incompatible with hunting, fishing, farming, and economic prosperity. Without sacrificing their distaste for the Leviathan, conservatives can ally themselves with private-sector organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy, and associations of local people who live off the land or water they are trying to preserve. The movement to save the Chesapeake Bay is a perfect example.

➤ ***Family farms***. Conservatives should work to destroy agribusiness, which mistreats domestic animals, poisons the land with chemicals, gluts the markets with mediocre foodstuffs, and strangles small farms. No more subsidies for land-grant colleges, where our taxes pay for research for corporate farmers.

➤ ***Consumerism***. Just for starters, don't let Wal Mart wreck *your* downtown.

➤ ***Small businesses***. Clinton's 1993 tax law increased the burden for almost everyone, but it did cut small businesses' capital gains tax. *The Wall Street Journal* peevishly opposed those salutary clauses. Conservatives should also line up with liberals to battle corporate America's outsized political clout and stranglehold on the regulatory agencies.

➤ ***Stopping the drug war***. Conservatives should favor legalizing drugs, or, at the very least, leaving their regulation up to local communities. The totalitarian "war on drugs" has done nothing to reduce their availability. Drug legalization has a respectable conservative provenance: The Austrian free market economist Ludwig von Mises was an early supporter.

➤ ***Diversity and tolerance***. Cultural diversity as properly understood (*not* as a cover for pseudo-Marxist Third Worldism) promotes the growth of autonomous communities with their own ways of life. Conservatives should take a second look at Lani Guinier, an innovative legal thinker who invoked a Southern agrarian, John C. Calhoun, to argue for assurance that racial minorities receive voting representation.

➤ ***Good manners***. Conservatives should oppose legalistic sexual harassment codes but encourage all extra-legal efforts to force people to behave like ladies and gentlemen.

➤ ***Giving peace a chance***. Let's bring back George Washington's foreign policy. Conservatives should generally let other people fight their own wars, intervening only when there is a direct threat to the U.S. national interest.

So, Burkeans of the world, unite. But keep in mind that some of your fiercest enemies are likely to be other people who mistakenly call themselves conservatives. □

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Milkshakes in the African Desert

. . . and other absurdities brought to you by the Agency for International Development's multi-million dollar consulting game. A former staffer reports

BY STRYK THOMAS

I knew I had arrived as a high-powered consultant in Africa when I was assigned a chauffeur and a gleaming white Toyota Land Cruiser. True, I was bought on the cheap—just an ex-Peace Corps volunteer who was picked up for his knowledge of the local language and culture. Also true, my motor-powered prestige belonged to the Agency for International Development (AID), and would only last until I was dropped off in a village. Nevertheless, I sensed I had entered an utterly new realm.

I started working for AID in Niger, the West African country where I'd just finished serving in the Peace Corps. The agency was planning a multi-million dollar program to prepare Niger to deal with future droughts and other disasters. My job was to study traditional perceptions of natural disasters and village coping strategies. The idea was to learn how villagers already dealt with such catastrophes, and to determine what sorts of projects AID could implement which would not compete with time-honored methods. Using someone who'd just spent two years in a village, as opposed to flying in a "food security specialist" from Washington or Paris, seemed a logical and efficient means to achieve a noble goal.

One of my first lessons at the agency was that although hiring me saved money—by avoiding travel and hotel costs, as well as the pricey salaries of more established professionals—the desire to conserve American taxpayer dollars was not why I got the job. I was classified as a "local hire," which meant far less paperwork to bring me on board, and payment for my services could be handled with few authorizations. Still, I knew enough to realize that international development was a business, after all, and was satisfied with the prospect of an interesting experience.

Niger's AID mission is adjacent to the U.S. Embassy. When I first entered the building, I realized AID's offices were its own worst enemy. After two years living in the African bush, I suddenly learned what "culture shock" really means. I was stunned to discover that the mission was a perfect recreation of an American office, from the gray cubicles to the American Standard toilets. Air conditioners hummed and Niger's barren landscape was barely visible beyond the irrigated lawns and the steel-reinforced gates of the compound.

A week after my arrival, I learned that my superiors had become concerned about the costs of my research. I originally had six months to carry out the study, barely enough time to do my work with any kind of accuracy. Suddenly, I had only three weeks.

"We need to get this done," I was told, "so we can go ahead with the projects."

I was young and eager, so I avoided asking the first question which came to mind: If they already knew what projects they were going to do,

Stryk Thomas is a Washington writer.

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why had they hired me to find out which ones would be appropriate?

My research turned into a track meet, trying to beat the deadline. Many of my village visits were unannounced, so I had to scramble to find people to interview. Discussions were hasty, and then I had to move on. Time is *not* money in West Africa. If you want accurate, detailed information, it will take you a while to get it.

After delivering my final report, I was treated to lunch at the American Rec Center next door. The Rec Center is in a shady grove of eucalyptus trees. CNN droned from a TV, the air smelled of bacon cheeseburgers, and the milkshakes were ice cold. The room was full of consultants. I sat next to a middle-aged man who was assisting Niger's transition to democracy.

"We need to educate villagers about the democratic process," he said, "so they'll understand how to vote. I've got this idea: We'll give them computer work stations where they'll be linked to the U.S. via satellite. They could ask questions about elections, and get specific answers—exactly what they want to know. What do you think? It'll fly, won't it?"

I tried to listen, but all the while I kept wondering where they would get the electricity, and who was going to teach those villagers to read.

AID relies heavily on consultants—specialists in health, natural resources, and other fields. These "experts" are flown around the world from Washington by AID to devise solutions for whatever nagging problems face their destination country. They are hired by AID for short-term contracts to work with its field missions, and are sent home well-compensated. The consulting game brings together government officials, professors from America's top universities, and people from private firms in a steady Beltway orbit. The agency swarms with these folks. In fiscal year 1994 alone AID spent an estimated $183.9 million on outside consultants.

How many consultants does that money buy? That depends on how you count, because AID pays these people in as many different ways as there are categories in the agency's budget. Depending on a consultant's purpose and the ease of justifying his employment, he is hired out of various operating expenses, program funds, or other means. Personal service contracts are one popular way of hiring freelance consultants. By the end of September 1993, AID was funding 4,362 of them overseas and 29 in Washington.

William Bramhall

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But that's only the beginning. To avoid personnel ceilings and hiring freezes, the agency also contracts with other U.S. agencies, consulting firms, universities, and private voluntary organizations who in turn sub-contract to consultants or other firms. These middlemen include the Department of Agriculture, for-profit firms such as Chemonics, Cornell University's School of Agriculture, and CARE. This way, whole teams of people can be hired indirectly, and AID only has to account for a single allocation of funds to one organization. In 1992, the agency had a work force of 10,627, counting only those with a direct employer-employee relationship. But the additional workers employed through middlemen numbered nearly as many—approximately 10,000.

Despite impressive credentials, AID's consultants often perform poorly. So poorly, in fact, that you get the sense that the point of hiring them has more to do with a hallowed Washington tradition—spending and expanding the agency's congressional appropriation—than with actually improving the developing world. Living in the United States or Europe, they are often ignorant of the language and culture of the countries where they work. During nearly three years in French-speaking Africa, I came across innumerable consultants whose knowledge of French was scant or worse. They'd been hired because they knew farming in Oklahoma, or had studied economics at Harvard.

When these people meet with local government officials or other Africans, they generally need someone to translate one or more languages for them. I knew an agricultural economist from the University of Michigan who had come to Niger to study rice production and marketing along the Niger River. When interviewing local farmers, he needed someone to translate the local language to French and someone else to translate the French to English. Never mind the nuances of meaning lost in all this translating. Africans are reluctant to discuss financial dealings with friends, let alone strangers, and this arrangement could not have inspired confidence. Undoubtedly many of the Africans this economist spoke to were highly suspicious of his motives and much of what he was told simply was not true.

When I returned to the U.S., I ascended to consultant's nirvana: Rosslyn, Virginia. There, amid this Washington suburb's Bauhaus-inspired sprawl, I worked for AID's Africa bureau and got to see how the agency puts its own spin on information coming in from the field. What was most remarkable was watching agency experts create their own culture of development, a culture that often bore little resemblance to realities overseas.

Travel AID

AID keeps technical specialists on hand in Rosslyn to send into the field at a mission's request. What field experience these specialists have is often easily forgotten, or grows stale over time. The constant contact with consultants and colleagues returning from the field, as well as state-of-the-art e-mail and faxes, is seductive. They give AID's Rosslyn experts the feeling that they are in touch with the situation on the ground. Generally, however, that feeling is illusory. The endless rounds of meetings and workshops with other AID employees and consultants, the constant faxing and e-mailing, only confirms their own opinions and presents evidence to support their own theories.

For example, in the Africa Bureau, the natural resource management unit produced a slick brochure reviewing its successes in Africa during the eighties. Among the model projects it cited was the Majjia Valley windbreaks in Niger. Fast-growing trees had been planted densely in rows to break the strong prevailing wind and decrease soil erosion. The trees were planted on a mammoth scale—hundreds of rows, each stretching for over 10 miles. The local government and CARE, serving as an AID contractor, had forced farmers to accept these giant hedges, some of which ran through their fields.

I knew this project well. I knew the new trees had attracted insects and birds that preyed on field crops; that the water table of the valley had drained perilously low; that tensions between the project managers and herders over land rights have festered. The project may have enjoyed some success when it began almost 20 years ago, but over time it became known locally as, at best, a mixed blessing. Nonetheless, AID's specialists in Washington trumpet the Majjia as one of their great development achievements.

The most striking aspect of day-to-day life at AID's Rosslyn headquarters is the amount

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staffers travel. Employees compete for sojourns to beautiful, exotic places, the farther away and the more exotic the better. Little attention is given to planning these trips efficiently. An economist in my office spent a week in Madagascar, the next in Montana, and the following back in Africa. And when AID employees travel overseas, they stick to foreign versions of the environment they left in Rosslyn, staying only in the best hotels and rarely seeing more of the country than can be taken in on the drive to the AID mission or the U.S. embassy. When I asked returning colleagues about their trips, they would invariably sigh and admit they had no time to actually get out and see the country.

Not all travel is a bad idea, of course; some is essential. A week or two for an important conference now and then is understandable, and a taste of African reality is necessary for the office-bound. But AID's frequent flyers rarely stay anywhere long enough to learn from their experience or conduct profitable reconnaissance, and often the agency sends an employee when a few faxes would do the trick. Travel, for AID employees, is an end in itself.

AID administrator J. Brian Atwood's plan for reorganizing AID will make the situation worse. The plan aims to centralize technical expertise (in health, natural resource management, etc.) in one global bureau, as opposed to the regional ones which exist now. People with expertise in Africa could work in Asia, and vice versa, for example. For a few programs this makes sense. A locust control program currently in the Africa bureau, for instance, should have a global mandate, as outbreaks of these pests cross national and continental boundaries. But in other areas centralization is a recipe for in-fighting over projects and trips overseas. Experts on health issues in South Asia will vie for control over projects in Africa or Latin America. The competition will provoke turf battles throughout the new bureau and it will be the best in-fighters, not the most qualified analysts and experts, who will win the jobs. Worse, the tendency to value technical or bureaucratic expertise at the expense of local knowledge of language, culture, and other particulars will be institutionalized. AID's specialists will continue to deal only in generalities without even a regional focus to nudge them toward the realities of life in the countries they wish to assist.

Atwood also plans, for cost cutting reasons, to close superfluous field missions and bring staffers back to the belly of the beast in Washington. No doubt superfluous missions and personnel do exist overseas, and they should be trimmed. But the broader plan remains a funny way to cut costs. Travel for short-term assignments will increase as consultants or AID specialists from Washington travel more frequently to make up for smaller or non-existent local staff. The learning curve and redundancy of sending consultants will be steeper as more and more of them have only a cursory knowledge of their destinations.

It makes more sense to employ specialists from the countries themselves as consultants, instead of bringing in someone from a continent away. For one, this would lend some credibility to AID's claim that institutional capacity building—helping to boost a country's ability to take charge of its own development—is a top priority. Also, excessive dependence on Western consultants undermines the work of the real knowledgeable sources: the very few Westerners who have years of experience in a country and speak local languages, and local people who have adequate training (often at Western universities) in addition to a native's understanding of the local culture. Former Peace Corps volunteers can often do the job at AID, but care is needed when selecting which to hire because many of them in the past have been easily coopted by AID's bureaucratic culture. Most of all, more effective oversight, from the Office of Management and Budget as well as Congress, will be necessary to make sure that when the agency lets a contract it isn't simply expanding AID's budget by dodging personnel ceilings. A crucial step will be minding contract outlays as much as the agency's regular budget.

Some of AID's workers combine a strong technical background with a sound understanding of the local language and culture. AID needs to figure out who these people are and then encourage them to stay longer at their particular missions. Finding the right personnel is the wisest principle AID could abide by as it reorganizes and the quickest way to end the absurdities of the agency's consulting game. The sooner that happens, the less likely it is that anyone drinking a milkshake in Niger will propose installing computers in the African desert. □

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Caucus Crazy

What do minor league baseball, footwear, copper and the Mississippi Delta all have in common?

BY DAVID SEGAL

Did you know that when National Guard soldiers spend two days training, they get paid for four? Nice deal, huh? It comes courtesy of the U.S. Congress, which more recently did the Guard an even bigger favor by pressing the Pentagon to reduce Guard ground combat units more slowly than active duty troops during the military's downsizing.

The argument that you hear in both the House and Senate is that the country should rely more on these reserves because they cost less. They *are* cheaper—about one-third cheaper—but what you don't hear is that they are a lousy value, and not just because of the two-fer pay scheme. "They're less expensive, but you get what you pay for," says William Kaufman, a defense analyst and professor emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In other words, these soldiers are about one-third as well trained and about one-third as capable as their active counterparts, making them less than ideal for both rapid deployment (it takes them weeks to get ready) and peacekeeping missions (it takes training to know when *not* to shoot)—precisely the kind of missions we're likely to need them for in the coming years. It's worth remembering that most of the Guard's ground troops called up during the Gulf War weren't combat-ready until Schwarzkopf was delivering his "Hail Mary" press conference after the fighting was over.

In reality, Congress' affection for the Guard probably has less to do with cost than with constituents—Guardsmen and -women across the country who are organized and lobbied for by one of Washington's quieter, though highly effective outfits, the National Guard Association. "These guys make the NRA look like amateurs," says the Brookings Institution's Martin Binkin. You get a sense of their clout from a pair of letters sent by a group of legislators to Colin Powell back in 1991, letters which basically said, "If you make deep cuts in the Guard, you'll have to come to Capitol Hill with a very good reason." The letterhead on those missives read "Congressional Guard Caucus."

You've probably never heard of it, but the caucus, orchestrated by the Guard Association, boasts a su-

Research assistance for this article was provided by Scott Jones and Stryk Thomas.

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per majority of 70 members in the Senate, making it the chamber's largest. The group's success during the downsizing can be understood this way: a special interest (the Guard) won itself a favor (fewer troops cut), at the expense of others (active troops). It's thus a classic Washington tale, similar to auto interests keeping gas taxes pinned so low that the government has to spend hundreds of millions to keep up the highways. Or the tobacco growers maintaining federal crop subsidies even as the Surgeon General implicates cigarettes in the deaths of 400,000 Americans each year. Or the elderly lobby insisting that even the wealthiest retirees receive Social Security and resisting curbs on the growth of all middle class entitlement programs, programs which will cost $700 billion annually by the turn of the century if Congress doesn't intervene.

The fireman to see: Rep. Curt Weldon, founder of the Fire Services Caucus

Caucuses like the Guard's—there are now about 40 others in the House and Senate—are superbly emblematic of this special interest problem, and they also exacerbate it. Mancur Olson, the author of *The Logic of Collective Action*, once wrote of the federal government that "Most redistributions are from the unorganized to the organized." A caucus adds a pernicious twist to Olson's ageless verity: it turns the members of Congress themselves into lobbyists. Caucuses are thus another facet of the every-group-for-itself ethic that now pervades Washington, an ethic which has led to legions of perverse subsidies, dubious tax breaks, and a calcified government so besieged on all sides that it can barely creak into action when it attempts serious reforms.

The genesis of caucuses can be traced back to 1958, when a group of liberal Democrats founded the Democratic Study Group. The idea was slow to catch on; through the 1960s, only two more groups were founded, but by the 1970s Congress was crawling with them. Most charge no dues to join, and only a few have their own staffs or offices. Some of these groups are extremely active, others will be dormant for years until an issue pertinent to the group arises. What unites these groups is their zeal in pushing some narrow interest.

The growth of caucuses occurred, not coincidentally, as power in Congress became more decentralized. Thirty years ago, a handful of senior members sitting at the heads of large committees did most of Congress' decision-making, and the political parties themselves were able to marshal their members and offer centralized leadership. A series of reforms in 1970s, however, spread power around on the Hill, dispersing it, primarily, to the 144 different chairmen of the chambers' various subcommittees—a lot of chiefs, considering that altogether Congress has only 535 Indians.

Today, party discipline is sporadic at best, and far more members are able to impact, block, and amend legislation. If lawmakers' offices used to be local branches of a national franchise—with prices and policy largely set by headquarters—now they

Paul Forsyth

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are independent corner grocers. And decidedly, these stores are of the full service variety. Every member this year, in addition to $133,600 in personal salary, is given $557,400 with which to hire help, an official expense allowance of $122,500, plus travel stipends, rent money for the district office, and franking privileges worth at least $200,000. In sum, the typical congressional office these days is loaded, well staffed, and, most importantly, open for business.

As Congress evolved, Washington saw an explosion in the growth of special interest groups. In 1956, Gale Research, Inc.'s *Encyclopedia of Associations* listed fewer than 5,000 associations. By 1970 there were more than 10,000, by 1980 nearly 15,000 and by 1990 more than 20,000. As Jonathan Rauch points out in *Demosclerosis*, this rate of growth means that in the decades between 1970 and 1990, ten new associations arrived in Washington each week. As importantly, these associations came to represent more people. In 1965, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) had less than a million members. By 1990, AARP boasted a membership of more than 30 million, had a staff of 125, a budget of $3.5 million and its own zip code. The group is the largest of them all, but its exponential rate of growth is typical. Meanwhile, the number of lawyers in Washington boomed, quadrupling between the years 1972 and 1987, and the number of corporations with a Washington office increased by a factor of ten between 1961 and 1982.

As special interests flourished, and as Congress became more responsive to outside pressure as it spread power around, caucuses sprouted everywhere. Some, like the Coal Caucus, focus on one particular industry; others, like the Mississippi Delta Caucus, focus on a region; still others such as the Hispanic Caucus focus on a people.

It's a fair guess that each of Congress' many caucuses has, at minimum, a kernel of justice at its core. (No doubt we should keep *some* Guard troops, the question is just how many.) But because politics is frequently a zero sum game, when a group organizes and wins itself some favorable treatment—a tax break, a subsidy, whatever—it is taking something from another group. For instance, back in 1985 a business coalition comprised of Kingsford Charcoal, 7-Eleven stores, amusement parks, and lawn and garden outlets got together and successfully lobbied Congress to extend the months covered by daylight savings time; in different ways, they all benefited from a longer day. The owners of movie theaters, on the other hand, were probably less than pleased. Fewer people go to early shows when the sun is still up and theaters do compete with amusement parks for entertainment dollars, after all.

It's easy to imagine similar effects resulting from the work of the Auto Caucus, which has pushed for foreign import quotas on behalf of Ford, Chevrolet, and GM. Or the Footwear Caucus which, before nearly every manufacturer it represented sent factories oversees, also pushed for import quotas on shoes. Or the Northeast-Midwest Caucus which spends most of its energy examining federal formulae to prevent money from going to the Sun Belt.

Legislators are invariably eager to champion the blinkered causes of constituents. Take the Minor League Baseball Caucus. The group, started by the representative from Cooperstown, N.Y., Sherwood Boehlert, exists to counter those members who think that Congress should lift major league baseball's antitrust exemption, a move which would make it easier for teams to leave town if another city made them a better offer (The last baseball team to migrate was the Seattle Pilots, who became the Milwaukee Brewers in 1970).

Now, what's interesting about this group is that whether a member believes the antitrust exemption is a good idea depends, with uncanny regularity, on how it would affect that member's local baseball fans. Those with major league teams in town love the exemption because they aren't anxious to see their teams leave. (Boehlert wants the exemption *in situ* because he has several minor league teams near him and believes that changing the law would cause the majors to financially abandon those teams.) Rep. Mike Bilirakis, on the other hand, hates the antitrust exemption. He represents St. Petersburg, Florida, a town which constructed a 45,000 seat stadium called the Thunderdome in hopes of attracting a major league baseball team. In 1992, St. Petersburg offered the owner of the Giants $3 million more than San Francisco and still couldn't get the team. The Thunderdome is teamless today, and St. Petersburg residents are in a huff, which perhaps explains Bilirakis' position.

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Comparatively speaking, this is a whimsical debate, but organizations represented by caucuses often discover that it is more enriching—and easier—to enjoin lawmakers for a bigger piece of the federal pie than it is to expand the pie by producing more wealth. To see how this works, consider the deal a small group of sugar refiners won for themselves back in 1987. That year, as *The New York Times* reported, the group got Sen. Alfonse D'Amato—who has a refiner in his district—to help them stitch a tariff rebate provision into a 1,000 page trade bill, a provision worth $365 million to them. D'Amato later got $8,500 in campaign contributions. No doubt the refiners had to pay a hefty salary to one or several lobbyists to secure this deal, but even if the whole thing cost $30,000, that's still quite a nice return—over $12,000 for each dollar invested.

For interest groups in Washington, that kind of favoritism—with the right connections and enough lobbyists—is about as hard to get as a haircut. Not only has this led to an accretion of narrowly targeted benefits, but it has created a kind of paralysis that makes large-scale, sweeping legislative action extremely difficult. If several organized interests are affected by a reform in different ways, a tug of war ensues in which only incremental change is possible. It's not surprising that Congress passes scores of commemorative bills—Chinese Food Appreciation Week and the like—each year but has yet to hammer out a health care bill to cover the country's 37 million uninsured. The House and Senate are like ships whose crews can figure out what to have for dinner but can't decide where to steer the boat. Caucuses have subtly made that problem worse. "The consequences of organizing a Steel Caucus, a Port Caucus, or a Suburban Caucus," argues Burdett Loomis, a political scientist at the University of Kansas, "are to formalize more fully the already strong representational tendencies of the Congress and to weaken further the ability of the legislative branch to act responsively toward society-wide problems."

Mr. Burrito

There are three reasons for a legislator to start or join a caucus.

- **To become a player.** Let's say you're new to Congress, and let's say your district has the nation's highest concentration of Taco Bells. You've arrived in Washington anxious to make your mark, hoping, especially, to do right by the hundreds of constituents who earn their paychecks from Taco Bell.

Making your mark, you realize not long after you've settled comfortably into your office in the Longworth building, won't be easy. There are, after all, hundreds of accomplished, ambitious legislators around, most of whom have been there for a few years, and nearly all of whom have created an identity by becoming well known, quotable experts and sources on a few issues. The press knows they can call them when those issues get hot.

Nobody is calling you. Worse, when you get your committee assignments you find that none of them allows you to push taco-related issues. The mandarins who rule the Ag committees don't have a good reason to cross the street to spit on your shoes, let alone look at your Salsa amendment.

What are you going to do?

You're going to start a caucus. Send fellow legislators what's known on the Hill as a "Dear Colleague" letter announcing that you are creating the House Taco Caucus. In the letter, state that the caucus will focus on the many topics connected to the taco industry, and personalize each letter by pointing out how many constituents are employed by Taco Bells in each member's district.

You'll soon get back a spate of sign-me-up letters. The good news for you is that now you can correspond with the Agriculture Committee leaders using your new Taco Caucus letterhead which, with any luck, sports the names of something like 87 members of Congress. When relevant legislation comes down the pike, you're sure to get phone calls answered. And when burritos hit the headlines, journalists will light up your switchboard.

Voila. You are a player.

It worked for Curt Weldon. A representative from the seventh district of Pennsylvania, Weldon is the founder of the Fire Services and Safety Caucus. The caucus started in 1987, but came into its own two years later when the office of Jim Wright, then-Speaker of the House, caught on fire and Weldon grabbed a fire extinguisher and helped to put it out. According to Weldon aide David Hackett, "That gave him a way to meet the Speaker in a different circumstance."

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Tidbits & Outrages

"THIS IS EVIAN CALLING FOR TOMMY BOGGS. WE THINK WE HAVE A JOB FOR YOU."

Newsweek reports that if NASA builds its proposed space station according to current specifications, on each day of a mission, each of the six astronauts on board will consume $319,200 worth of bottled water.

"WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?" ASKED TONYA HARDING

In order to motivate his team for a state semi-final game, an Illinois high school football coach, Dale Christensen, staged a phony shooting in front of the squad. Christensen later described the gambit as a "lesson plan that went awry."

TECHNOLOGY AND THE SHARPER IMAGE CATALOGUE: TWO REASONS LIFE JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER

Now professional nail care is at your fingertips.

A giant improvement over those anemic fans in nail salons, this professional home nail dryer will harden four coats of polish *in ten minutes*. Enamel dries rapidly under alternating waves of blowing air: warm to dry the polish, cool to harden it. Now, you can leave for a dinner date or prepare for a party without worry of smearing, nicking, or chipping your handiwork. Works great on feet too, and lets you dry your toenails while you do your fingernails. Plugs into wall outlet. One-year warranty. Free [illegible]!

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BUT HE FELT GREAT

Dr. Stuart Berger, an author of best-selling health and diet books, who contended that his programs would result in increased longevity, died recently at age 40, weighing 365 pounds.

BOYS IN THE HOODS

Saying "We had to make a quick decision," Bob LaBelle, the principal of Yosemite High School in central California awarded costume prizes at a school Halloween party to two teenagers wearing Ku Klux Klan outfits and pretending to lynch another boy wearing blackface.

—Scott Shuger

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When 337 members signed up to join, Weldon carved out a nifty little niche in the House as the Fire Guy. He bought a used fire truck and started driving it in hometown St. Patrick's Day parades. His group sponsored legislation calling for a new fire alarm system in congressional offices, and another bill authorized the minting and sale of the Ben Franklin Fire Service Bill of Rights silver coin. In October 1992, Weldon's arrival on the radar screen was confirmed when President Bush traveled to Weldon's district to sign the commemorative coin legislation into law.

Weldon is hardly a pioneer in all this. Then-Rep. Bob Edgar, for instance, used the Northeast-Midwest Coalition and the Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future (the members would apparently discuss policy for the next millennia) to add luster to his name. When Edgar ascended to the chair of the NEMW Coalition, *The Washington Post* described the job as "a national podium which is the envy of his more anonymous colleagues."

• **To network.** The Congressional Black Caucus was created back in the mid-seventies to combine the strength of black members, who at that time and until just recently were meager in number. The caucus has had its share of legislative triumphs, but in recent years its annual fundraising soiree has become as famous as its good works. Last year, *Washingtonian*, the city's local glossy, called the Congressional Black Caucus Dinner one of the town's "Galas for Gold," putting it in the company of established hobnobbing festivals like the Gridiron Dinner, the Symphony Ball, and the Helen Hayes Awards. Celebs like Spike Lee and Magic Johnson have been known to show up. A seat costs $500. And what goes on? The point is not to discuss the travails of the inner city or the ongoing fight against discrimination. One attendee, George Wilson of American Urban Radio, summed up the evening this way for *The Washington Post*: "You get the chance to hand your card around and if you talk fast get a girlfriend."

The Arts Caucus, similarly, is popular because it allows members to sip cocktails with Hollywood stars visiting to testify on the Hill. But nearly every caucus functions, in part, as a vehicle for networking, providing members with a way to meet fellow lawmakers. The Fire Services Caucus has certainly been good to its creator. "Curt was able to meet a bunch of members through this issue and build bridges that he was able to use on other issues," says aide David Hackett. "These are opportunities that a junior member of the minority party otherwise wouldn't have."

Joining a caucus is also a nifty way to network voters. Rep. Bill Richardson of New Mexico explains: "As a member of the Arts Caucus, I can tell my constituents who are interested in the arts that I'm with them. If someone writes me on arts issues, I can write back and say, 'I'm in the Congressional Arts Caucus.'"

That's why most reps belong to a handful of caucuses, although some, like Rep. Boehlert of New York, are a member of two handfuls. Here's his résumé: the Northeast-Midwest Coalition, the Northeast Agriculture Caucus, the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, the Organization of the New York State Congressional Delegation, the Rural Caucus, the Environmental and Energy Study Conference, the Travel and Tourism Caucus, the Arts Caucus, the Fire Services Caucus, and, as founder and chair, the Minor League Baseball Caucus.

• **To attract money.** Many caucuses are lightning rods for PAC dollars. In 1990, Rep. Bud Shuster, co-chair of the Congressional Truck Caucus, collected over $32,000 in PAC contributions from the likes of Ryder, the Teamsters, and North American Van Lines. Rep. Chris Smith, of the Pro-Life Caucus, netted $12,000 from the Right to Life PAC and Christians for Life. Senator Wendell Ford of the Senate Coal Caucus received over $20,000 from Peabody Coal and other mining companies. Most of these gentlemen received these checks because they are powerful members of relevant committees. Bud Shuster, for instance, is ranking Republican on the Public Works and Transportation Committee, and Wendell Ford is chair of the Energy Research and Development subcommittee of Energy and Commerce. So why join the caucus?

"It's advertising," says Ross Baker, a political scientist at Rutgers University. "Belonging to the Mushroom Caucus allows a member to carry around a sandwich board that says, 'I'm one of you and I care about your problems.'"

The sandwich board might also read "I care about *my* problems" because caucuses lay bare

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how politicians allow parochial interests to drive their reasoning about national policy, rather than the other way around. The Guard caucus is so large because virtually every member has reservists and armories at home, causing lawmakers to pressure the Pentagon to leave the Guard alone, even though doing so arguably makes our military less effective. As Mancur Olson points out, from the standpoint of ambitious politicians who want to keep their jobs, this kind of myopia makes a perverse sense.

"The typical congressional district is one-435th of the country," Olson explains. "If there's an expenditure of federal dollars in the district, then on average the district will collect 100 percent of the benefit and pay only one-435th of the cost. The rational member will therefore seek pork for the district; there is no incentive to take the national interest into account."

The system is now rigged so that each member has reason to kick and scrap in the government pantry for any goodie that can be grabbed, regardless of what that might mean for the country as a whole. With caucuses, members spot a benefit they want, find other members who want it, and then collude to extract it from the great federal maw. At their worst, then, the logic of caucuses is simply the logic of pork writ large. And now that both baseball and Chevrolet have their very own caucuses, the get-mine political culture they reflect slowly, regrettably, is becoming as American as apple pie. □

The Washington Monthly

JOURNALISM AWARD

FOR FEBRUARY 1993
IS PRESENTED TO:

Michael Winerip
The New York Times

In a three-part series, Winerip goes inside the disastrous federal student loan program to explain how it manages to lose $3 billion a year. Where does the money go? First, to fly-by-night trade and vocational schools that attract federal loans and grants, then viciously dash the hopes of the people who depend on the inadequate training they get there. Then there is the Department of Education itself, understaffed and overburdened with the task of overseeing and collecting student loans. And Winerip wisely warns of the danger of ignoring these problems just as Clinton expands direct federal lending to students. Fortunately, a solution is at hand: Have the IRS collect the loans [see "Making College Possible," Jonathan Cohn, April 1994].

Bob Woodward and Benjamin Weiser
The Washington Post

In 1972, a federal welfare official hastily inserted a 26-word clause into a mammoth welfare bill authorizing payments to poor children under 18 with disabilities—even troublemaking children with no disability other than routine signs of adolescent rebellion. In 1993, those 26 words were costing the government $3.6 billion a year, and Woodward and Weiser's investigation unearthed some disturbing truths. "The history of the children's disability program illustrates what can happen when a law is enacted without much debate or study and then becomes subject to interpretation by regulators, advocates, and the Supreme Court," the reporters write.

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Nominations for stories published or aired in May will close June 15. The winner will be announced in the September issue.

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Modern Times

CHILDREN OF CHOICE

Freedom and the New Reproductive Technologies

JOHN A. ROBERTSON

Cloning, genetic screening, embryo freezing, in vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood, Norplant, RU486—these are the technologies revolutionizing our reproductive landscape. In this wide-ranging account, John Robertson, a leading legal bioethicist, goes to the heart of issues that are redefining family, parenthood, the experience of pregnancy, and life itself. Through the lens of procreative liberty, Robertson analyzes the ethical, legal, and social controversies that surround each major technology, and offers a timely, multifaceted analysis of the competing interests at stake for patients, couples, doctors, policymakers, lawyers, and ethicists.

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Knowledge, Gender, and Power in Modern America

ELIZABETH LUNBECK

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The Case for Castration, Part 1

A convicted child molester argues for the only treatment which he believes will prevent him from re-offending

BY LARRY DON MCQUAY

Childrens' nightmares are haunted by demons, some imagined, others real. I'm one of the real ones; I haunt the dreams of scores of children. You'll find me in a Texas prison serving an eight year sentence for molesting a single boy. That's all the court convicted me of, but I have abused close to 200 children.

In the United States, thousands of kids meet monsters like me each year. We prowl your communities, stalking, pouncing when possible, forcing children to endure degrading, violent acts. We wear the innocent-looking masks of a father, step-father, uncle, cousin. We could wear the caring face of a baby-sitter, or a teacher, or a priest. I myself have worn various masks: brother, cousin, step-father, uncle, school-bus driver, family friend. All to molest unsuspecting boys and girls.

Scarcely a week goes by without another disturbing news report about another poor soul victimized by a child rapist. Listen carefully to that next report. Odds are that you'll hear that this same sex offender had a past conviction for molesting at least one other child.

That's because prison is not a deterrent for most sex offenders, and it definitely will not be a deterrent for me. I do not want to return to prison; I would like to be a law abiding citizen. But the threat of being incarcerated for the rest of my life—and the threat of spending, as I believe I will, an eternity in hell—will not stop me from re-offending when I am released.

In fact, in many cases, prison intensifies sex offenders' conditions by making us more savage. Where once we would "playfully" undress a victim, we now roughly strip them. What was once inappropriate touching and "caressing" escalates to a full-scale invasion. What was fondling and masturbation becomes dehumanizing sodomy. What used to be a cultivated "relationship" that took time and preparation becomes an unplanned kidnapping and rape where children are beaten, tor-

Larry Don McQuay is prisoner #547825 in the Coffield Unit Penitentiary in Tennessee Colony, Texas. He is serving an eight year sentence for child molestation.

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tured, ravaged, and often found dead and mutilated, or never found at all. You see, sex offenders who've been to prison not only emerge with an appetite for violence but also learn a lesson about how to stay out of jail: make sure that the next victim can't *ever* report them.

I speak from experience. Lately, many of my dreams and fantasies have become more violent. My sleep is plagued with fantasies of raping kidnapped children in a way that renders them unable to identify me. Without the right treatment, I believe that eventually I will rape, then murder, my victims to keep them from reporting me. That scares me. It should scare you, too.

To reduce these crimes against your children, Texas Governor Ann Richards, for example, advocates more prisons and "harsher" sentences for sex offenders, especially repeat child molesters. Thus she's pushing for more of a solution that does not work, a solution that only means I will take up bed space in one of the many new prisons she is spending millions of dollars on so that later I can commit the same crime. The fact is, prison is nothing more than an oversized, overpriced homeless shelter. Inmates are well fed and clothed and have warm beds to sleep in, all for free. To sex offenders, loss of freedom simply means there are no children available to rape. But we can get child pornography, we can fantasize about the children we watch on television, and we have the memories of our past crimes. Moreover, sex is plentiful in prison. We substitute young-looking partners for children and let our imagination do the rest.

Our victims, meanwhile, retain the searing, ghastly memories of abuse, memories that can last a lifetime. Who is punished more?

According to Texas statutes, as well as those of most other states, child molesters currently in prison can be paroled. But a grotesquely high percentage of all untreated sex offenders rape again. Returning us to prison makes us stop—but getting us back in jail means that another child must first fall prey. The system returns a child molester to prison *after* he is captured by the police, *after* the child-victim has suffered the torture and savagery of being abused, *after* the child-victim has endured a grueling and humiliating interrogation by strangers. Always after, and always too late to save the child. Our justice system, by releasing criminals like me into communities without effective treatment, now dooms countless children to abuse. And most child rapists get away with raping many children, some over and over before being caught.

There is a civilized alternative to this tragic cycle: castrate repeat sex offenders.

Now, some good and decent citizens claim that castration itself is barbaric. What *is* barbaric is what I have done to so many children; refusing to castrate me is barbaric to the children I will molest. *Mandatory* castration of sex offenders, whether for their first, second, or third conviction of a sex offense, is currently a violation of the United States Constitution because it is considered "cruel and unusual punishment." But no punishment is crueler or more unusual than the pain I have caused my victims. *Voluntary* castration is not unconstitutional, but no state allows it.

The governor of Texas, as well as many other state governors, is well aware of the statistics and other information regarding castration, but she turns a deaf ear to my pleas. In doing so, she turns a deaf ear to the children who are my future victims. Criminals who want to be rehabilitated are rare, so it is inconceivable to me that those who volunteer to be castrated are denied this treatment.

I do not write as a scared or worried parent. I have—thankfully—no children at all. I am scared for your children. When they have nightmares, let them be about the ghouls they see in horror movies or on the Saturday morning cartoons. They shouldn't have to have nightmares about me.

My next parole date is June 1995. □

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The Case for Castration, Part 2

An expert in the treatment of sexual offenders explains why Mr. McQuay could be right

BY DR. FRED S. BERLIN

Larry Don McQuay was once a child himself. From the innocence of youth, no doubt filled with the promise of life, he became an uncle, step-father, school bus driver, and child molester. A self-proclaimed monster who haunts the nightmares of children, fearful himself of spending eternity in hell, who is Mr. McQuay and what should we do with him?

To be sure, even the mention of castration has an ugly, jarring sound to it; it is an idea that polite people naturally shrink from. But as Mr. McQuay's own words show, there is a terrible problem out there and the ways we are currently trying to solve it aren't working. So if castration, in any form and even in combination with other measures such as counseling, strikes you as the wrong solution, keep thinking about the problem, because everyone can agree that putting people like Mr. McQuay back on the streets is crazy.

Let's be clear about the stakes here. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, approximately two out of every 1,000 children have been sexually abused, a figure that totaled 138,000 youngsters nationally in 1986. A significant percentage of this figure likely reflects the prevalence of pedophilia in a given community. Because of the driven nature of the disorder, an individual pedophile may make contact with 2 or 3 different children per week, some of the children sometimes being teenaged prostitutes. This can add up to hundreds of youngsters over a period of several years. Most pedophiles are physically nonviolent.

Let's also be clear about castration. Many people believe that castrating a sex offender is like cutting off the hand of the crook. Not so. Cutting off the penis would be like cutting off the hand of the crook, but that is not what castration is. Surgical castration involves removal of the testes only. When the penis is removed but the testes are still left intact, a man will still try to have sex. If the testes are removed, but the penis left intact, a man is far less likely to attempt to engage in sexual behavior. Removal of the testes generally de-

Dr. Fred S. Berlin, an associate professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, is director of the National Institute for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Trauma.

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creases the *desire* for sexual activity, rather than affecting the capacity to perform.

The testes are the major source of testosterone production in males. It is the marked elevation in testosterone in males at the time of puberty that is associated with a marked increase in sexual desire and interest. Lowering testosterone can reduce the intensity of sexual desire.

A man can will his right arm to move. He cannot will an erection. He can get an erection by thinking certain thoughts. Tragically, for him and for the rest of us, Mr. McQuay apparently discovered that thoughts and cravings about children are what arouse him. To be afflicted with such a condition can itself be a nightmare. It is a condition that cannot be willed, legislated, or punished away. Reported rates of recidivism in the scientific literature for pedophiles not receiving treatment have varied considerably. It's difficult to know whether a given pedophile has not re-offended or simply re-offended and not been caught. Recidivism rates could, however, be as high as 65 percent. This figure makes intuitive sense: If one goes to prison because of a sexual attraction to 10-year-old boys, there is nothing about being in prison that will erase that attraction.

The good news is that lowering testosterone levels works. One Danish study reported a 4.3 percent recidivism rate over a period of up to 18 years among 117 surgically castrated sex offenders, whereas 58 noncastrated offenders were 10 times more likely to re-offend. A 7.4 percent recidivism rate was reported among 121 castrated sex offenders in Switzerland over five years compared with a 52 percent rate at the 10 year followup among men not undergoing the procedure. Yet another Danish study involving over 900 castrated sex offenders followed for periods of as long as 30 years reported a mere 2.2 percent recidivism rate.

Surgical castration, however, is neither necessary nor foolproof. Its effects can be reversed by taking testosterone. A better idea is so-called chemical castration. This involves no surgery—it consists of injections that lower testosterone levels. Compliance with medications used to lower testosterone can readily be monitored because they can be given by means of periodic injections. This treatment recently made headlines. In Florida, a legislative attempt is being made to impose testosterone-lowering injections upon possibly unwilling repeat offenders.

There is precedent in this country for compelling persons to undergo medical procedures without choice. At one time, because of the danger of smallpox, everyone was required to be vaccinated so that they would not pose a danger to the community. Convicted felons lose certain rights (e.g., the right to bear arms). If it were clear that a community would definitely be safer with a sexual offender's testosterone lowered, then society would likely have a right to insist that he make himself safe.

Lowering testosterone is not a cure, a guarantee, or a panacea, but it might be far more palatable to a society in which many people are squeamish about mandating surgical castration. In conjunction with psychological counseling, most testosterone-lowering treatments are effective, especially when used to help individuals who want to change. In combination—chemical castration *and* counseling—we've seen encouragingly low rates of recidivism; one study found a 15 percent rate, a figure which is deceptively high because the study broadly defined re-offending to include non-sexual contact, like visits to schoolyards.

Today most people still consider sexual offenses, even the many that are nonviolent, to be more a question for the legal system than one in which science and medicine can play a useful role. But like it or not, it is a fact that over 90 percent of incarcerated sex offenders sooner or later will be free. If legislation and punishment alone cannot fully solve the problem, medicine and science need to be called into action. And if society can be made safer by such means, why not use them? Mr. McQuay, we should remember, will be among us again soon. □

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My Favorite Reform

End Rush Hour Traffic Jams

BY PAUL GLASTRIS

During the Cold War, we Americans were forever pointing to television images of Soviet shoppers standing in interminable lines as a testament to the superiority of capitalism, which allocates goods and services through pricing rather than long waits. Then we would smugly jump into our cars, drive onto highways, and sit in bumper-to-bumper traffic. Marxists might call this an "internal contradiction." Give us slow service at Denny's and we demand to see the manager. Stick us with traffic jams and we're sheep.

Frustrated sheep, to be sure, and getting more frustrated every year. From 1975 to 1987, the share of interstate highways in metropolitan areas that were congested during rush hours rose from 42 percent to 63 percent, according to a study by Clifford Winston and his colleagues at the Brookings Institution. The reason is simple: More people are driving more cars longer distances. While the U.S. population grew only 15.9 percent from 1975 to 1989, the total number of cars on the road soared almost 50 percent, thanks largely to suburbanization and the rise of two-earner families. Meanwhile, the length of the average commute grew by 27 percent.

The result is that we are spending an ever-greater portion of our ever-shrinking leisure time idling in traffic. Not that we mind commuting *per se*. Indeed, those minutes of privacy between work and home when we can decompress, alone with our thoughts and CDs, are some of the great if unadmitted pleasures of modern life. The problem is the congestion, which turns delightful 20 minute trips over swiftmoving streets into punishing 50 minute, bumper-to-bumper ordeals. This has been good for talk radio hosts and the car phone industry. It's been awful for our nerves and terrible for the economy. A study by the Texas Transportation Institute estimates that traffic congestion costs Americans $43.2 billion annually in lost time, as measured in average wages.

Fortunately, there is a fairly straightforward way to reduce or even eliminate clogged traffic: Make drivers pay tolls during rush hours. After all, space on roads during peak periods is a valuable commodity. By giving it away for free, the government naturally creates the same chaos that would result if your favorite restaurant started handing out free meals.

The concept of using tolls to reduce traffic congestion (as opposed to financing highway construction, which is what traditional toll roads do) is hardly new. For decades the idea has been advocated by economists and traffic experts, most recently by Brookings scholar Anthony Downs in his book *Stuck in Traffic*. But it's never been seriously tried, mostly because the notion of charging voters for the privilege of driving to work is one for which most politicians have managed to contain their enthusiasm. As Downs points out, traffic congestion is a quintessential modern public policy dilemma, one in which the real solution is politically unacceptable while the acceptable fixes won't work.

Examples of the latter—palatable but ultimately pointless—include the most obvious

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approach to congestion: building more roads. It's certainly true that road building has not kept pace with auto use. From 1982 to 1988, the total number of miles driven by all vehicles in 39 large metro areas grew twice as fast as roadway capacity. But as any highway official will tell you, more and bigger roads don't necessarily unsnarl traffic. That's because of a phenomenon Downs calls "triple convergence": Any increase in the carrying capacity of a given road lures commuters away from other roads, or from other travel times, or from mass transit. Road improvements do tend to shorten rush periods. But they also encourage more development, and hence more traffic.

Another approach that won't help much is beefing up mass transit. It's not just that Americans have an aversion to riding to work on trains and buses. It's that the economy is now predominantly suburban, and suburban factories and office parks are dispersed over such a wide geographic area that even devoted mass transit experts can't figure out how to link them up conveniently. Only 3.3 percent of suburban workers currently commute by public transit. Doubling that percentage would be a Herculean achievement. Yet even that would at best reduce congestion by 3.7 percent, a gain that would be offset in one to three years in a typical burgeoning suburb simply by the continuing growth in auto usage by other commuters.

A third approach, favored by both the Bush and Clinton administrations, is something called the intelligent vehicle highway system (IVHS). This involves electronic sensors embedded in roadways that send information via centralized computers to TV screens on the dashboards of individual cars, telling drivers which routes are least busy. The Department of Transportation is currently spending hundreds of millions of dollars developing IVHS. Unfortunately, it won't solve the congestion problem. Millions of drivers already enter clogged expressways every day knowing full well what they're getting into. Telling them which routes are marginally clearer will have the same marginal effect as improving roads: Commuters will switch their routes or schedules and descend on the openings like shoppers at a blue light special.

Matt Brownson

The one approach that probably would work is based on the premise that drivers who insist on taking up limited road space during rush hours ought to pay a premium for doing so. The concept, called "peak period pricing," would turn all major thoroughfares in a metro area into toll roads. The tolls would be zero during most of the day, then rise during the AM and PM rush hours to levels sufficient to discourage just enough drivers to keep traffic flowing reasonably swiftly. Commuters could avoid the toll by shifting their travel times to non-peak hours or by taking mass transit where available. Or they could reduce their out-of-

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pocket costs and still travel during peak times by car pooling.

One reason why no one has ever tried peak period pricing is that the technology to make it work smoothly has only recently been developed. Old-fashioned toll booths actually hinder traffic as drivers queue up to pay toll-takers or toss change into baskets. But now the same electronic advances that are behind IVHS can make it possible to charge tolls without forcing cars to slow down. Roadside sensors can read signals from small transponders placed behind the license plates of individual cars. Centralized computers then tally the charges and mail drivers monthly bills or deduct sums from prepaid accounts. The whole apparatus could be quickly paid for out of revenues from the tolls.

In addition to the delight of driving from one side of town to the other with your foot on the accelerator more than on the brake, peak period pricing offers profound advantages for society as a whole. An administratively and technologically feasible congestion pricing system, if applied nationwide, would save about half the $43 billion in travel time Americans now lose, estimates economist and traffic expert Kenneth Small of the University of California at Irvine. Mass transit systems would see substantial increases in ridership. Auto emissions would drop and air quality would improve as more people car pooled. Corporations would promote telecommuting and flexible work schedules even more seriously than they do now. Governments could save tens of billions of dollars in no longer needed road expansion projects, and with price signals to guide them, politicians and highway engineers would be more sure that those roads they do build are actually needed. There would be plenty of funds available for new infrastructure, too: A nationwide congestion toll system would generate an estimated $58 billion in new revenues. Finally, the regional agency that would have to be created to administer the toll system would move society a step closer to a badly needed reform: metropolitan government.

The idea of using prices to regulate traffic could be expanded, along with the benefits. We could charge airlines stiffer fees for peak period landing rights, thereby reducing both flight delays and the need to build lots of new airports. Countless billions in road repairs could be saved, and the rail and barge industries strengthened, if trucks were charged much higher fees to reflect the much greater damage they inflict on roadways. Road congestion could be further reduced by ending the tax break employers now get for providing their workers with free parking. Several studies have found that when firms stopped providing free parking, the percentage of employees who drove to work solo dropped from 66 to 39 percent.

There is only one inarguable and unavoidable downside to peak period pricing: Most people would hate it, at least at first. The ability to drive anywhere, anytime, for free, is taken by Americans to be something like an inalienable right. The very idea of rush hour tolls would outrage the public and create golden opportunities for ideologues—especially talk radio hosts, who could be counted on to oppose any reform that threatens to reduce their drivetime listenership. Conservatives would vilify the idea as an attempt by an expansionist state to foist surreptitious taxes on the citizenry. (Conservatives like tolls, but only on privately owned roads). Liberals will worry about the working poor, who can already barely afford the gas and upkeep on the cars they need to get to suburban jobs. Fortunately, the Regressivity Argument can be easily met: Government could simply credit electronically the toll accounts of low-wage workers. The Leviathan Argument could be handled by using at least some of the billions in toll revenues for tax relief.

This is not to say that there wouldn't be technical difficulties and unintended consequences. For instance, traffic engineers would have to figure out how to keep non-metered side streets from being swamped with drivers looking to avoid tolls. There are other questions as well. Will peak period pricing help or hurt downtowns? Will it accelerate or slow suburban sprawl? No one knows.

But there's a good way to find out: Try the concept in one congested metropolitan area and see what happens. It should hardly be politically difficult to dismantle the tolls if too many problems arise. My guess, though, is that the public will eventually grow to appreciate and support a system that allows them to spend less time with Rush Limbaugh and more time with their kids.□

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Get Smart About Inflation

BY CHRISTOPHER GEORGES

For a moment this spring, madness was rampant. Whitewater crowded health care and education off the front pages; Barry Goldwater told the Republicans to get off Clinton's back; John Bobbitt announced he's marrying again. Most important, the Federal Reserve and Wall Street went bananas as rising interest rates sent the stock and bond markets on a roller coaster ride. "Dow Falls 72 Points Amid Market Fears" screamed a March 30 headline in the *Los Angeles Times*. The subhead? "Seventh drop in eight days puts average 300 below where it stood two weeks ago. Investors are worried by interest rates and political turmoil."

This market madness is especially perplexing given the economic facts. Last winter, the economy finally hit its stride: Unemployment dropped; consumer confidence rose. Sales of automobiles, furniture, and other durable goods rose 15.4 percent, and new home sales jumped 31 percent. In fact, the economy overall grew at an amazing 7.5 percentage points in the last quarter of 1993, its strongest showing in over a decade. But in every silver cloud there is a dark lining. Consider this from *The Washington Post*'s front page report on the growth figures: "[The 7.5 percent increase] cheered White House officials and economists but triggered a sell-off by Wall Street traders fearful that inflation is not far behind. . . . what they saw yesterday was more inflation, higher interest rates, and the end to the bull markets of the early 1990s."

What gives? Why, if things were going so well, did the financial markets immediately assume prosperity meant inflation? An assumption that we must break down—this is the reform—is that economic upswings are automatically followed by inflation unless the Fed raises interest rates to slow growth. If the country is to generate true, long-term growth, we must stop saying this, in the face of contradictory evidence, because the more we say it, the greater the chances the Fed and the markets will turn it into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

According to conventional wisdom, as the economy grows, people buy more goods. But when people buy more, we must produce more to fill their needs. Suddenly, there are production bottlenecks and labor shortages. This causes prices to rise. Wages then rise to keep pace with prices. The result: inflation. This view is so ingrained that few even question it; it is a staple of economic journalism, presented without question or nuance. On "Good Morning America" during the stock market's wild spring ride, for example, correspondent Stephen Aug said, "The trigger [for the stock plunge] was the news that the economy had created 456,000 new jobs during March. Traders felt that would lead to higher wages and higher prices."

To prevent this horror, the Federal Reserve has essentially one tool: its ability to affect interest rates. If the Fed pushes up interest rates, businesses and consumers will be less inclined to borrow money. If businesses don't borrow, they don't expand, and if individuals don't borrow, they can't spend as much. Thus, higher interest rates slow the economy and stifle inflation. Sure, a slower economy is bitter medicine. But, if it prevents inflation later—the traditional thinking goes—it's worth it. The Alice-in-Wonderland quality of all this can be summarized this way: As the economy recovers, the bond market gets anxious about inflation. So the Fed raises rates slightly in order to calm fears. Then the bond market takes that as confirmation that the Fed itself is worried about inflation, so it gets even more concerned.

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But suppose an improving economy does not necessarily mean inflation is on the way? Suppose American producers can meet the demands of a growing economy? Suppose, in other words, that the chorus of voices in the economic community and the media that assumes that recovery equals inflation is wrong. If that were so, high interest rates would not be medicine but poison. After all, higher rates not only keep people out of work but can lead to a recession. And who benefits from those higher rates (aside from the bond sellers who make a tidy profit as the markets churn)? The well-to-do, especially those who can afford to keep a thick wad of cash in interest-earning money market accounts. David Shulman, Saloman Brothers' chief economist, admitted as much to the *Post*'s Steven Pearlstein: "The economic recovery is now moving from Wall Street to Main Street," Shulman said early in March. "There will be less money flowing into the financial economy, and more flowing into the real economy."

In general, by raising short-term interest rates—as the Fed has done twice this year, on February 4 and again on March 23—the market makes bonds more attractive investments than stocks, drawing money away from companies that could use the money to expand. The better the rest of the economy, the more unhappy the bond market is, because people spend their money on investments other than bonds. (The reason *both* the stock and bond markets fell this spring had to do with speculators who were overextended and had to liquidate their securities when interest rates went up, thereby flooding the market with bonds and driving prices down. But the larger point remains: Had the conventional wisdom not put the rate rise in motion to begin with, the markets would not have fallen at all.)

Could it be that economic growth may not, in fact, lead to inflation and that the economic community's automatic assumptions are wrong? A look back at the periods of American economic growth shows that time and again the American economy can meet the demands of a revved economy. From 1954 to 1968, for example, the country had nearly full employment, strong growth, and virtually no inflation. (Unemployment in those years averaged 5 percent, which is even less than it is now, another sign that the conventional wisdom—high employment=higher prices—is wrong.) And before that, between 1800 and 1940, the economy also grew rapidly. Yet in 1940 the wholesale price level was the same as in 1800. In fact, the post-Civil War period until 1900 was a period of rapid expansion in real output accompanied by price *deflation*.

What makes the conventional wisdom seem especially nutty today is that the price of the one commodity that has been at the heart of the two most severe bouts of recent inflation—oil—is actually *dropping* right now. A proper understanding of history ought to show reporters and pundits that the inflation of the seventies had little to do with a growing economy or with an inability of American workers to meet increased demand, but instead was largely prompted by shortages, actual or imagined, due to the oil embargo. In fact, it's telling that the three periods of very high inflation since World War II—1946-47; 1973-74; and 1979-80—were all caused by real or imagined shortages of goods. (Laura Tyson, head of Clinton's Council of Economic Advisors, made this same point in *The New York Times* in mid-April.) With no such commodity problem on the horizon today, it's verging on insanity to stifle the recovery out of a baseless fear of inflation. Yet that is what is happening.

And where does that leave us today? Is inflation, in fact, on its way? Not if you look at the larger economic picture. For one, while the unemployment rate may be decreasing, there are still 8 million unemployed workers, 6 million involuntary part-time workers, and a relatively low factory utilization rate. The growth rate of the economy, according to the Fed, is projected to be 3.5 percent in 1994, hardly enough on its own to generate a surge in inflation. And there is plenty of drag on the economy from restructuring corporations, defense conversion, tighter government spending, and higher tax bills. Most important, prices of many commodities other than oil—such as coffee and cotton—are hovering near five-year lows.

Of course we need to be wary of inflation. But if we are to avoid an unnecessary recession, crazy market swings, and throwing people out of work, we—and this includes the media—must resist crying wolf about inflation every time unemployment drops. The Fed must not overreact to the bond market's anxieties, and Wall Street needs to understand that growth does not automatically mean inflation. □

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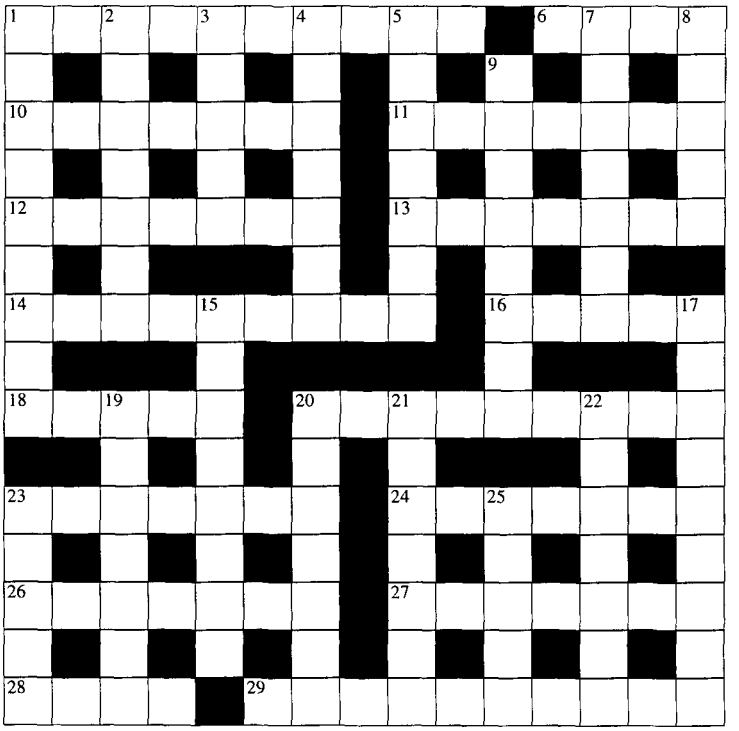
Political Puzzle

BY JOHN BARCLAY

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g. (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g. USA, are treated as one word.



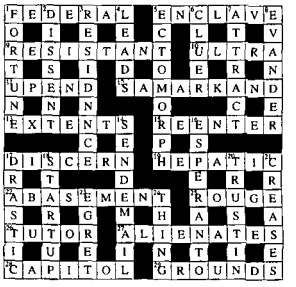
ACROSS

1. Current issue? We're what it troubled! (10)
6. The best case restated. (4)
10. Proposition hero met in confusion. (7)
11. Support athlete taking dive awkwardly. (7)
12. Shopkeeper losing a floor worker. (7)
13. New England larch changing cemetery building. (7)
14. Makes baseless activity around beginning of month. (9)
16. State back following Amin's first language. (5)
18. Live misogynist losing head. (5)
20. Vibrates in scriptures on a testamentary base. (9)
23. Part of organ orchestrated a murder. (7)
24. Wing built of rail (initially iron). (7)
26. Opposed Turkish leader with small institute. (7)
27. Newsworthy nine met complete reorganization. (7)
28. Bill's time threshold. (4)
29. Washington structure improved use with hoe. (5,5)

DOWN

1. Earlier issue? Misplaced target awe. (9)
2. Develops theory controlling seatide. (7)
3. Movie actor's first recalls another's last. (5)
4. Mad liar confused Byrd, for example. (7)
5. Looks out for former household members catching cold. (7)
7. Greek letter opposing wine. (7)
8. Time period for Southern senator. (5)
9. Movie set changed to oil can. (8)
15. Cleverly get miner taking measurements. (8)
17. Deliberately omit steel plant. (9)
19. Iron ads displayed losses of territory. (7)
20. Second event about light? (7)
21. Last set played for the least lively. (7)
22. Literary light rescheduled tea hour. (7)
23. To make law toss net around current. (5)
24. Former foe occupying seat in Clinton cabinet? (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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Is Little Rock Corrupting Washington? *C'mon*

Take a look at the national capital and you'll find more sweetheart deals, conflicts of interest, and back-scratching than small town Southerners ever dreamed of

BY JON MEACHAM

Increasingly, there is a sense in Washington that the Arkansas political culture does not work in the White House. . . . Little Rock culture was rooted in an informal way of doing business, in which behind-the-scenes relationships played at least as large a role as the evident formal structure of power.

—Maureen Dowd, in *The New York Times*, on the day Webster Hubbell resigned

Washington is simply shocked—*shocked*—at the loose morals the upstart crowd from the South has brought to the capital. On "Inside Washington," National Public Radio's Nina Totenberg sighed this spring, "Everybody scratches everybody's back in Little Rock. It's a tiny little community. It's not the same."

Not the same as Washington? The rap against Little Rock is that everybody seems so cozy—politicians, lawyers, and businessmen grow up together, go to school together, marry each other, and then move in the same circles. On "Washington Week in Review," *Newsweek*'s Howard Fineman said, "Arkansas is the kind of big and basically poor state where maybe 200 people run the whole show. They have the money. They've got the power. They're on a first-name basis with each other. Most of them work in downtown Little Rock within about a mile of each other. They all go to the Little Rock Country Club and the bar at the Capital Hilton. . . . and the line between public money and private business is very fuzzy." *The New York Times* editorialized, "[T]he genius of the Federal system does not reside in importing to Washington the faults and idiosyncrasies of the state capitals."

But the enormous irony in assuming Little Rock is corrupting the national capital is this: If the Arkansans ever needed a how-to guide on operating in an ethical twilight, they would look to Washington, not Baton Rouge or Atlanta. Washington has long been home to apparent conflicts of interest, lawyer overbilling, sweetheart deals, and scheming political spouses. "There are three things in life," Edward Bennett Williams, the consummate Washington lawyer, used to say. "Money, power, and public relations."

Research assistance for this article was provided by Stryk Thomas.

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That is Washington's creed. So even though Whitewater will inevitably fall off the radar screen (there are already signs of that happening) Washington's patronizing disdain for Southern clubbiness—and the appearance of possible conflicts in two-career marriages—is laughable coming from pundits like Fineman, whose wife, Amy Nathan, practices with Akin Gump, a well-connected, socially important law firm that has a very permeable wall between lawyering and lobbying. Its leading lights include veteran fixers Vernon Jordan and Robert Strauss, and, until last year, Ruth Harkin, the wife of Senator Tom Harkin. CBS White House correspondent Rita Braver is married to Robert Barnett, a Washington lawyer who has done personal work for the Clintons. Congressman John Dingell of Michigan watches out for the interests of the Detroit automakers, most recently derailing legislation that would have required more energy-efficient vehicles, and is married to a General Motors executive. Sounds a lot like what the press is calling "incestuous" in Little Rock, doesn't it?

Take a hard look at what the Washington media say about the Clintonites and you cannot escape the not-so-subtle disparaging message—a cultural dismissiveness that says, *Oh, what else can you expect from a crowd of hillbillies?* Of course, this does not excuse the Clintonites for things they may have done wrong in Arkansas or in Washington. Nor are all Washingtonians who are connected to other Washingtonians crude influence peddlers. Many coincidences of blood, marriage, and career are just that—coincidences. But journalists are forgetting—or, worse, simply not noting—that the back-scratching arts the Clintons are accused of importing from down South have been practiced here with unmatched skill for years. This makes the press' condescension both ahistorical and hypocritical—and the more Washingtonians get away with assuming the capital's ethical murkiness is due to the Arkansas invasion, the less they have to examine their own sins.

➤ ***Washington assumption: Before the Clintons arrived from Dogpatch, official Washington was a sophisticated, ethical nirvana.***

In *The Wall Street Journal*, Paul Gigot wrote this spring, "Far from shedding the Arkansas political culture, the Clintons have brought it with them, complete with cronies, a mind-set for cutting ethical corners, and the arrogance that often comes from governing a one-party state."

But a case study in how Washington insiders conducted themselves long before the Arkansans showed up—and in how the press is cowed largely into silence by Beltway satraps, Democrat or Republican—unfolded when George Bush named his old friend James Baker secretary of State in 1988. Nobody in the eighties was more inside-Washington than Baker, so if Washington insiderdom is automatically held in higher ethical regard than Southern mores, we are in real trouble.

Consider this sequence of events, as reconstructed by *The Washington Post*'s Walter Pincus in 1989: When Baker became Reagan's chief of staff in 1981, he owned $3.5 million worth of stock in Texas Commerce Bancshares Inc., which rose in value to $4.2 million by 1985, the year he switched jobs with Donald Regan to become secretary of the Treasury. The stock was held in a "qualified blind trust," which meant Baker knew what he owned, though not the current size of the asset. He recused himself from Texas Commerce's direct affairs, but nevertheless was dramatically involved—as a Treasury secretary would be—in general banking matters, including testifying in favor of legislation that made interstate banking mergers easier.

In May 1987, Chemical Bank of New York took over Texas Commerce under those new laws in what was, at the time, an unprecedented banking merger. The deal had to be approved by the Federal Reserve Board, and parts of it had to pass muster by two federal officers who had been appointed by then-Secretary of the Treasury James Baker: the comptroller of the currency, Robert L. Clarke, a Houston friend and political ally of Baker's, and FDIC chairman William Seidman, with whom Baker had served in the Ford administration. Both approved.

Meanwhile, Baker continued to be active in Third World debt issues while he was a knowing

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stockholder in Chemical, the third-largest U.S. lender to those countries, with $4.5 billion in outstanding loans. For example, in a 1987 meeting with the Brazilian finance minister, who was at the time urging Third World debtors to default, Baker strongly urged the opposite course—which obviously advanced the interests of debt-holders, especially Chemical. Yet during the Reagan administration, no reporter ever pointed out Baker's ownership of the bank stock, and he never mentioned it in his confirmation hearings for the job at either State or Treasury, although the subject of Third World debt came up at both.

According to people familiar with the situation, after the '88 election, Baker sent an intermediary to ask Boyden Gray, whom Bush had put in charge of ethics decisions for the transition, whether Baker could continue to hold the bank stock. (In 1988, a new Justice Department ruling required such a waiver for any holding that might pose an appearance of a conflict of interest, effectively changing the rules under which Baker had been playing in the Reagan administration.) Gray indicated that he would not waive the rule and would probably ask Baker to sell the stock.

At that point, Baker, a master political infighter, swung into action. Baker's camp apparently tipped off *The New York Times*' William Safire to the fact that Gray, while serving as counselor to Vice President Bush, had been paid as much as $50,000 a year to serve as chairman of his family's $500 million communications company. As a vice presidential aide, what Gray did was legal, but would have been barred if Gray had worked for the *president*. (The Bakerites were probably gambling that the distinction would be buried, still embarrassing Gray and shutting him up about Baker's holdings.) Nevertheless, it was a sexy story: the ethics czar with an ethical problem of his own. The *Times* was reportedly planning a Sunday story by investigative reporter Jeff Gerth, then a Monday morning column by Safire. But in February, on the Friday before the *Times* published, Pincus and Bob Woodward of the *Post* got wind of the competition's plans and called Gray, who cooperated in a preemptive story—one that was softer than the *Times*' would have been and which focused on the fact that Gray, as White House counsel, was reluctant to put his assets in a blind trust—that ran in the *Post* on Saturday. That forced the *Times*' hand. They ran their Gray piece in the late Saturday editions (which are not distributed nationally), and Safire wrote a snarling column the next week chiding Gray for media manipulation. The point remains, however, that *Baker*, not Gray, was the real culprit. Note that all this happened in Washington, not in Little Rock, and that at the beginning of the Bush administration, two intimates of the new president were calling each other out for apparent conflicts that existed while they were both high-ranking officers in the federal government.

Later that week in February 1989, Pincus wrote the first Baker/ChemBank stock story. It had all the elements of a major scandal: money (the holdings); cronyism (the appointments of Clarke and Seidman); the appearance of using public office for private gain (the meetings attended while Baker knew he still had a stake in ChemBank).

Congress' reaction? Claiborne Pell, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote Baker an almost sheepish letter asking about the stock. Baker answered by fax, saying, "I will recuse myself from participation, on a case by case basis, in any particular matter in which, in my judgment, it is desirable for me to do so." In other words, the same rules he had been operating under in the eighties. (Baker did sell the stock a few days later.)

The press' reaction? Hardly a blip. There was no "Nightline" investigation, little jawing on the Sunday morning shows, no calls for a special prosecutor. The major reason for this was that Baker had mastered the art of stroking the Washington press corps in his days in the Reagan administration. As an invaluable source of leaks, Baker built up an enormous reservoir of good will; in fact, Baker spent several hours a week with reporters, an investment that paid off when the worm turned. For example, Margaret Carlson's *Time* story focused, amazingly, not on Baker's conflict but on Gray's non-problem: "Last week Bush got a whiff of trouble in what he had promised would be a squeaky clean administration. It came from none other than his chief ethics officer, C. Boyden Gray. . . ." Carlson passed over Baker in a single clause.

When *Newsweek* finally got to the bank stock story almost five weeks after Pincus

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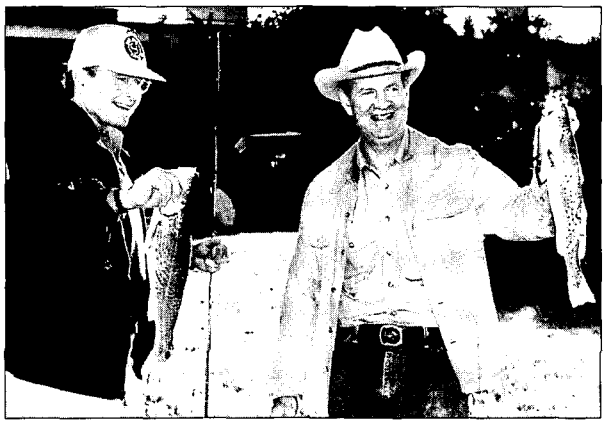
broke it, it too was entirely spun in Baker's favor. Headlined "Off on the Wrong Foot," the piece, from top to bottom, criticized *Gray* for his "naivete" and "lousy political instincts" for taking on Baker. Not a word of disapproval about Baker's vast potential conflict of interest as a federal official, which was the real, substantive sin at issue.

On ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley," there were only two mentions during Baker's season of scandal. The first was in a question from Cokie Roberts to John Sununu ("How ethical is this administration?") around the time John Tower was having problems with his nomination to become secretary of Defense. Sununu ducked it, and Roberts failed to follow up. The other was by Sam Donaldson, who asked Baker a who's-up-who's-down question about Gray, who had also criticized Baker's agreement to clear Central American policy with Congress:



Great Moments in Cronyism, Part I
George Bush, Jim Baker, and something fishy

UPI/Bettmann

> Donaldson: C. Boyden Gray, a few weeks ago, embarrassed you publicly by calling attention to your bank stock. You sold it at that point. Now, he is complaining that you have made a [foreign policy] deal that is wrong. Is there room for both of you in this administration?
> Baker: Nice try, Sam.

There the matter dropped, and the show bantered on. Baker the insider was unscathed; the culture had taken care of its own.

• ***Washington assumption: Hillary's greed led her to take advantage of her husband's position in a tiny capital where it was business-as-usual for people with interests before the state to help politicians with their personal finances.***

"Hillary was exceedingly ambitious for herself and her husband, and was the main family breadwinner for years," argued a *Newsweek* cover story in mid-March. "Reared in a thrifty home, married to a spouse with a casual attitude about money, she developed a perhaps excessive concern for her family's finances. . . . The question now is whether any of those pressures led her to cross ethical lines in various legal and business deals—and whether she used her husband's role as governor of Arkansas to help her to do so."

A major source of press outrage this season has been Mrs. Clinton's seventies' commodities speculation which, with the advice of a lawyer for Tyson Industries, turned, as a *USA Today* headline trumpeted, "$1,000 into $99,537." At the time, Bill Clinton was the incumbent attorney general and ahead in the polls in his first campaign for governor.

The *Times* wrote, "Their behavior may not have been illegal, but it was reckless and politically unattractive." But while Mrs. Clinton may indeed be guilty of middle-class, yuppie greed, her machinations aren't on par with what happens in Washington—a point the press has consistently failed to make. Many political families indulge in comfortable deals. When Bush, for example, was planning his first run for president in 1978, his friend (and later secretary of Commerce) Robert Mosbacher cut Bush and a third friend, Baker, into a lucrative deal involving a barge company called Hollywood Marine Inc. According to a 1988 story by Pincus and Woodward, Bush and Baker each put up $50,000 (a much lower average investment than others in the enterprise) and, by 1992, Hollywood had netted Bush $240,000, making it one of his most profitable personal ventures. Mosbacher later said that inviting Bush and Baker into the deal in the late seventies was "not a big favor, but a favor" because the barge deal turned out to be "a very, very good investment."

It might not have been as good, however, if Bush had not become vice president when he did. Cut to 1981. Hollywood Marine manufactures "single hull" barges; the Coast Guard proposes a rule requiring a second hull to protect against oil spills. Bush, head of Reagan's Task

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Force on Regulatory Relief, kills the rule after Hollywood and others lobby against it. Yet save for a single report in the summer of 1992, nobody picked up on Bush's possible conflict of interest. In addition, Bush collected $387,000 in directors' fees in the late seventies from four corporate boards (one of which was Purolator Inc., whose chairman, Nicholas Brady, became Bush's Treasury secretary). But the clear connections between Bush's private wealth and the friends he named to high office have never been the target of cultural or pejorative comment; the terminology is "friends and relatives," not "cronies" and "back-scratching." This is largely because Bush and his friends, especially Baker, are Washington creatures, and what they did—while no different from what Mrs. Clinton did with cattle futures and her sundry mutual funds—struck journalists as ordinary establishment business dealings. Had these deals been made on the golf course in Little Rock, instead of Burning Tree or Kennebunkport, you can bet the cultural tone would have been different.

Nor have other presidents passed up chances to accept expensive gifts or to get rich quick. California friends bought the Reagans a retirement house in Bel Air. And remember Nancy Reagan's habit of keeping gifts of designer dresses, jewelry, perfumes, handbags, and watches? After an early flirtation with criticizing Mrs. Reagan, the Washington press was charmed and conned by her boffo turn at a Gridiron Club dinner as "Secondhand Rose," a spoof of her own expensive tastes. But just because the First Lady could joke about it does not mean the story should have gone away. Nevertheless, thanks to press secretary Sheila Tate's p.r. instincts, away it went.

It goes on and on. LBJ became a millionaire only after he went to the modestly salaried Senate. Even Eisenhower had exceedingly generous rich friends such as Robert Woodruff, the chairman of Coca-Cola, and George Allen, a Washington millionaire, and a circle including two cattlemen, two oilmen, two distillers, two golf champions, two realtors, and three bank presidents. According to Stephen E. Ambrose, the leading Eisenhower scholar, "the gang" made Ike a member at Augusta National, built him a cottage there, and installed a stocked bass pond for fishing. They also advised him on his other investments, including purchasing the Gettysburg farm, refurbishing its colonial farmhouse, and equipping it with livestock. Allen even bought up all the surrounding land to make sure the Eisenhowers wouldn't be bothered by potential neighbors or development.

And while Mrs. Clinton has been cast in the Whitewater drama as Lady Macbeth obsessing over the family checkbook, it is old hat in Washington for the wives of prominent men to worry about money. In the fifties and sixties, for example, the former New Dealer and Washington lawyer Abe Fortas' wife, Carolyn Agger, herself a lawyer, urged her husband, at the time the guiding force of his firm and an informal advisor to LBJ, to stay out of government in order to represent lucrative clients such as Western Union and Sun Oil. Together, Fortas and Agger made about $300,000 in those years, or close to a million dollars a year in 1994 terms. According to Fortas biographer Bruce Allen Murphy, they spent it fast: They had a house in Georgetown, a vacation house in Westport, Connecticut, a Rolls Royce, and Agger spent vast sums on jewelry, art, and 150 pairs of shoes. In 1965, when Johnson pressured Fortas onto the Supreme Court (salary: $39,500, or a tenth what they had been making together), Agger was furious. "It's the goddamnedest thing," Agger said to Johnson aide Douglass Cater and his wife at a White House reception. "We can't afford it. Now I'll have to make all the money in the family and support him."

Under this kind of extreme domestic pressure, it is easy to understand why Fortas cast around for a few extra dollars after he went on the Court. He found a cash cushion in a $20,000-a-year consulting fee from Louis Wolfson, a Florida businessman who was under investigation by the SEC for alleged stock improprieties. In setting the terms for the fee—ostensibly to compensate him for occasional advice to Wolfson's philanthropic foundation and companies—Fortas arranged for Agger to receive the $20,000 each year after his death. In exchange, Fortas had to attend a single annual meeting. (And of course, it was possible that one of Wolfson's cases would end up affected by a decision of the Court.) Murphy reports that two weeks to the day after the first check was sent, Fortas was writing the White House to boost two of Wolfson's companies—both of which were under federal investigation at the time. It was a quiet deal, and became public only when Johnson tried to make Fortas chief justice in

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1968. Fortas, finding himself facing impeachment rather than promotion, resigned.

Although Chelsea Clinton hasn't been accused of cronyism yet, the children of Washington's powerful are as well-skilled in the art of using family connections as their mothers. In the eighties, Jamie Whitten, Jr., representing the barge industry, lobbied for the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway before his father's House Appropriations Committee. In 1990, *The Wall Street Journal* described how lobbyist Clifford Gibbons, son of the ranking Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee, brokered campaign contributions and access between his clients and his father. The Scripps Howard news service identified a dozen such congressional children who were lobbying in Washington, including Laurie Michel, the daughter of House Republican Leader Bob Michel, who represents a French drug company, and N. Hunter Johnston, son of Senate Energy and Commerce Committee chairman Bennett Johnston, who lobbies for General Atomics Corp.

Great Moments in Cronyism, Part II
Clark Clifford and Abe Fortas advised LBJ and watched their influence-peddling fees go through the roof

LBJ Library Collection/Yoichi R. Okamoto

• ***Washington assumption: Only Arkansas lawyers, especially from the Rose Law Firm, are used to loosey-goosey ethics, depend on personal connections, and overbill clients.***

On CNN's "Capital Gang," Robert Novak called Rose "the rogue law firm in Little Rock." In the *Times*, describing Webster Hubbell's resignation amid charges of overbilling and possible conflicts of interest, Maureen Dowd wrote:

> 'This is a blow to the Clintons, particularly Hillary,' said a top administration official who is close to the couple. 'Once again, it casts a bad light on their private lives in Little Rock. The seaminess of that place attaches itself to the Clintons through Hubbell, somebody they brought with them. . . .'

No matter how "seamy" Little Rock law might appear to be, Washington is worse. William Appler, of the 500-lawyer firm of McDermott, Will & Emery, which is a registered lobbyist for 51 corporations and trade groups, including the Electronic Industries Association of Japan, recently stole $1.1 million from his firm in legal fees and another $16,000 from clients to pay for meals and travel. His scam? Appler, a former Justice Department lawyer, asked clients—including companies he represented before the Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Trade Commission—to send checks for his services directly to him, not the firm. Appler billed those clients, in 1990 alone, for 5,325 hours. For that to be true, he had to have worked more than 106 hours for 50 weeks (he took a two-week vacation in the summer), or a total of eight hours a day on weekends and *18* hours a day on weekdays. On some days he logged more than 24 hours of billable work. His defense? That he was suffering from "narcissistic personality disorder." (Appler is in the process of being disbarred.)

In important ways, the rules of the Arkansas bar are actually much tougher than the ones that apply in D.C. For one, law firms in Arkansas are not allowed to set up working partnerships with non-lawyers (read: lobbyists); in Washington, much of downtown is full of just that kind of arrangement. Fortas' old firm, Arnold & Porter, one of the city's most eminent, is just one example.

Nevertheless, note the press' swooning reaction to the second coming of Lloyd Cutler. "They took a long time to fire Bernie Nussbaum," remarked the *Times*' Gwen Ifill on "Washington Week," "and when they finally did, they had to bring in someone who no one in Washington would question. . . . Lloyd Cutler." Over on "The McLaughlin Group," Eleanor Clift chimed in, "I think the White House has begun to turn the corner. The appointment of Lloyd Cutler is a very good one."

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What, exactly, does it say about Washington that "no one would question" Cutler? Since he is presumably redeeming the Clinton administration from its small town ways, he must be like Clarence the angel coming to save James Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*—a visitor from the Heavenly City.

Take a look at Cutler's career, however, as Mark Green, Ralph Nader's then-colleague, did in 1975, and mostly what you notice is that he is plugged in to every conceivable niche of Washington life, Democrat or Republican. Son of a New York lawyer who was a partner of Mayor LaGuardia's, Cutler went to Yale and then Yale Law. In 1942, Cutler quit his Wall Street firm to come to Washington to work in FDR's Lend Lease program and has never left. As a partner in Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering, Cutler has made millions representing corporations like General Motors, IBM, and CBS. Once a New Dealer, he later represented the auto companies in trying to fend off safety laws. His firm currently works for Aetna and the American Petroleum Institute, among other blue-chip clients, who retain the firm not only for sound legal work but for Cutler's cachet and connections. He advised the incoming Clinton administration on which lawyers to hire for regulatory agencies that monitor industries Wilmer, Cutler represents. Mentor to a generation of lawyers, including Gray and Zoe Baird (the former, Bush's White House counsel; the latter, Clinton's first nominee to be attorney general), Cutler navigates Washington as if it were, well, a small state capital.

Of course, Cutler is a good lawyer, and he represents respectable liberal organizations like Common Cause as well as his mega-clients. But the point is he is just as enmeshed in his world as the Clintonites are in theirs. Hubbell, an Arkansan hired gun, was scorned for being connected; Cutler, a Washingtonian hired gun, is lionized. What is spit on in one case is venerated in another.

To understand how accepted Cutler's way of doing business is here, you have to understand the history of Washington since the New Deal, when lawyers were among those who answered FDR's call to public service in the thirties. New Dealers came to the capital to do good, but in the forties men like Tommy Corcoran, James Rowe, and Abe Fortas—men once driven by idealism to defeat the Depression and Hitler—left government to go into private practice. Steadily, doing well financially replaced doing good as Washington's primary cultural force. And what was the new business of postwar Washington? Lobbying the vast new federal government the New Dealers had helped create and interpreting, for well-paying clients, the rules and regulations they had written while in office. By the early seventies, as a result of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and Richard Nixon's largely unacknowledged continuation of Johnson's federal regulatory zeal (the EPA and OSHA were founded in these Republican years), lawyering's triumph as the capital's main occupation was complete. This second wave also coincided with a sharp rise in Washington's cost of living, which made well-paid lawyers and lobbyists all the more socially prominent, since they were the people who could afford the high cost of housing and fill the space created by that era's office building boom in Washington. Firms such as Arnold, Fortas & Porter, Clifford & Warnke, and Patton, Boggs & Blow became the center of respectable Washington life, even more so than politics, since administrations come and go but the firms endure.

➤ ***Washington assumption: In a small Southern state, everybody knows everybody else—politicians, lawyers, lobbyists, journalists—and that intimacy leads to a go-along, get-along atmosphere.***

As Arkansan after Arkansan has died, resigned, or been demoted—Vincent Foster, Jr.; Webb Hubbell; William Kennedy—an I-told-you-so sense has emerged among the Washington media. "They're running out of cronies, and that's a good thing," Clift opined on "McLaughlin." Ifill, of the *Times*, said, "in the world that is Arkansas politics and in the legal world, a lot of that intersected." The implication is that cronyism is an exotic dish just recently imported to the capital.

But consider Thomas Hale "Tommy" Boggs, Jr., of Patton, Boggs & Blow, arguably the most influential lawyer-lobbyist in Washington and the access his 1,500 active clients could get through his kith and kin. When Boggs' father, Hale, was in Congress (1947 to

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1973), a client could buy some access to the powerful gentleman from Louisiana and the later House Majority leader. And Tommy's mother, Lindy, served in the House herself from 1973 to 1991, meaning she might be reachable, too. Tommy's sister is Cokie Roberts, of National Public Radio and ABC News, so there are two major media outlets right there; Roberts is married to Steven V. Roberts, formerly of *The New York Times* and now of *U.S. News & World Report*, thus affording Boggs' clients a subtle connection to major print organizations as well. And Boggs' other brother-in-law is a Princeton political scientist, offering a conduit to a major Ivy League university. That's all here, in Washington, not off in Dixie. When Ellen Proxmire gave a surprise birthday party for her husband, then the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, did she give it at their house? Nope—at Tommy Boggs'. So while it's virtually impossible to demonstrate quid pro quos, the net cultural effect is a capital atmosphere of intimacy and shared interests in maintaining the status quo. It's no wonder, then, that middle-of-the-road reporters—the Robertses are just two examples—are so deeply embedded in the folkways of their city that they are inclined to overlook its shortcomings.

Morton Kondracke, of "The McLaughlin Group," is another journalist whose immersion in the political culture is so complete that it is hard to separate him from the people he is supposed to cover. For example, when yet another veteran Washingtonian, Lloyd Bentsen, was in the Senate, he tried to found a fundraising breakfast where supporters could pony up $10,000 apiece for eggs and a chat with the then-chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. Kondracke attacked Bentsen's idea in a column. But when asked about his own fees to speak to lobbying groups, Kondracke refused to disclose his finances, harrumphing that it would be "an exercise in voyeurism and an invasion of privacy."

But how can journalists who make at least $5,000 a pop to yap before trade groups be expected to challenge the capital culture that has treated them so well? George Will commands about $20,000 for his appearances (Will's current wife, by the way, Mari Maseng Will, is a former Bush staffer whose p.r. firm represents the Japanese Automobile Manufacturers Association). And Pat Buchanan made nearly $1 million speaking and writing the year before he ran for president.

So the overwhelming cultural urge is not to queer a good deal by calling for what mainstream Washington would view as whacked-out, naive reforms, like a single payer health system. Joe Cosby, a Washington agent who handles journalist bookings, says lecture invitations require that the reporter "be on television" and "be conservative." This is a world, in other words, for people who won't rock the boat too much, and conservatives are world-class non-boat-rockers.

Kerr Dog

This is not surprising, given the way business is conducted in Washington and the values it prizes. No one in half a century has been a better example of this than Clark Clifford, who was Truman's closest aide but left the White House in 1950 to follow in Tommy Corcoran's footsteps as a private lawyer. His first client? Phillips Petroleum. Clifford landed Phillips through its chairman, "Boots" Adams, whom Clifford met through a mutual friend—Oklahoma Senator Robert Kerr. In 1952, Clifford went to the Democratic National Convention to work for the nomination not of Adlai Stevenson but of. . . Kerr, a Capitol Hill baron who, like the Duke of Newcastle, reveled in the corruption of other men and once proclaimed, "I represent myself first, the state of Oklahoma second, and the people of the United States third—and don't you forget it."

In his book *The Superlawyers*, Joseph Goulden relates this tale about the courtly Clifford's practice. A corporate general counsel in the Midwest called Clifford to ask what his company should do about a piece of tax legislation. A few weeks later, Clifford answered, "Nothing," and sent along a bill for $20,000. The counsel indignantly replied that he thought, for $20,000, he deserved a more complete explanation of the recommendation. "Because I said so," Clifford retorted—billing the company for another $5,000.

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Clifford became a trusted Kennedy family lawyer after he forced ABC to retract Drew Pearson's claim on "The Mike Wallace Interview" that *Profiles in Courage* had been ghostwritten. He also allied himself with Edward Bennett Williams, the criminal lawyer and Redskins owner whose clients included Jimmy Hoffa, Bobby Baker, John Connally, *The Washington Post*, Oliver North, and Michael Milken. In a revealing note about Washington life, Evan Thomas, Williams' biographer, reports that Clifford once wrote Williams, "'I appreciate your kindness in supplying the football tickets to the Solicitor of the Interior Department. He is new here and he has not seen the Redskins play and is anxious to do so.' In Washington, still culturally deprived in the 1960s, the hottest draw in town was the pro football team, and the man who controlled the best seats was Ed Williams." So the new man at Interior would owe Clifford a favor—or at least a returned phone call—for getting him the tickets, and would no doubt look favorably on Williams, the provider of the gift.

The larger question is why the press caricatures the South so broadly. For one, it's easy for reporters whose experience of the South is limited to dim recollections of *All the King's Men*, *Blaze*, or "The Andy Griffith Show" to fall back on those stereotypes to juice up their copy or talk-show comments.

When Clifford was indicted in 1991 for allegedly fronting for the drug-profiteering and money-laundering BCCI, *The Washington Post*'s Haynes Johnson remarked on PBS, "One of the great monuments of our times, Mr. Clark Clifford, who is an icon among virtually everyone who lives here, has had his own problems and is now fighting to repatriate his reputation at the age of 84. And this alone is a stunning story in this capital city." That he was an "icon" here tells us much about what Washington values. And it tells us how poorly the press perceives Washington's systemic faults.

BCCI, you see, was not Clifford's first ethical slip-up. In 1970, after Clifford had been LBJ's last secretary of Defense, he served on the board of the National Bank of Washington. The bank was then controlled by the United Mine Workers and its president, Tony Boyle, who was widely suspected of—and eventually convicted of—having arranged the murder of his predecessor, Jock Yablonski. At the time, *The Washington Monthly* revealed that the miners' pension fund was deposited in a non-interest-bearing account, with the result that the money benefited the bankers and the union executives instead of black-lung victims and their widows and orphans. As a lawyer, Clifford had to know the trustees' fiduciary responsibility to the miners was to ensure their pension fund was invested to their maximum benefit, not for the benefit of the bank that was paying Clifford to serve as its respectable front-man.

You could argue that 1970 predates Watergate and the rise of a more investigative, informed press. Fine—but look at the eighties, when BCCI got away with murder. In fact, BCCI's help in Washington makes Little Rock look like a kindergarten pageant: It included Clifford; a former senator (John Culver, Democrat of Iowa); three former federal prosecutors; two former Federal Reserve attorneys; and one high-level Senate staffer who was also a former assistant secretary of Defense. What's scariest about the 10 years the bank eluded U.S. investigators and reporters by lying and suppressing evidence is that Congress found in 1991 that "Most of what BCCI's lawyers, lobbyists, and political advisors did was within the standard bounds of legal practice in Washington."

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All in a day's work, in other words. The fawning accorded Clifford for his six years in government (five with Truman and one, 1968, with Johnson), compared to more than 50 in private practice was never more evident than on CNN's "Larry King Live," where Clifford was flacking his memoirs at the height of the scandal. After hearing Clifford out on BCCI without question, King came back after commercial:

> King: Clark Clifford is our guest. The book is *Counsel to the President*. He has counseled many. We should also say, on that banking thing we were discussing, these are only allegations we are dealing with here. Nothing has been charged or proven. These are all based on newspaper stories and magazine stories. Nothing has been charged and the government has, to my knowledge, not said anything. Right?
> Clifford: Correct.
> King: OK. Back to the presidents.

Is this world fading, as men like Clifford and Cutler grow old? Not in the least, and the next Clark Clifford is no Southerner but a consummate Washingtonian born and raised in New York: Ron Brown. When Brown, a lawyer/lobbyist with Patton, Boggs & Blow and former Democratic chairman, was nominated to be Clinton's secretary of Commerce, he sailed through a three-hour confirmation hearing. Senator Fritz Hollings defended Brown's representation of the repressive Haitian Duvalier regime with this morally dubious point: "Let the record show that before I got to the Senate, I used to represent murderers." Even Republican Senator Trent Lott tossed softballs, telling Brown, "I have to say that there's no doubt in my mind you're qualified by experience and background to do this job." Lott quickly ran down Brown's laundry list of influence-peddling, concluding:

> Lott: How do you respond to the fact that all of this background and these things perhaps send the wrong message as we begin with this new administration?
> Brown: Well, I would disagree, Senator, that it sends the wrong message. I think it sends the right message. I think it sends a message that I am someone who is a good advocate, who gets things done.

In 1993, the country had two vivid reminders of the kinds of things Brown used to get done for clients. First, his friends tried to pay for an inaugural party for Brown by attracting corporate sponsors at $10,000 each—corporations Brown would be dealing with officially at Commerce. (They ended up canceling the bash.) And later last year, a Vietnamese businessman claimed that Brown had been paid $700,000 after Clinton's election to help lift the trade embargo against Vietnam. Although Justice eventually cleared Brown of any indictable crime, he did have three meetings with a Vietnamese representative that his spokesman at first denied. Brown, like BCCI, shrewdly hired a lawyer who knew the inside ropes: Reid Weingarten, a former Justice Department white-collar crime prosecutor who successfully put away John Jenrette in Abscam, among others. Jenrette, you may recall, was the congressman who seduced his wife, Rita (who later became a *Playboy* model) on the Capitol steps. Yet there was little press comment on the Brown charges, or on the lobbying culture that could lead to Brown's straightfacedly defending one of the meetings with the Vietnamese—which occurred in the Commerce Department—as a "social visit."

The Clintons may end up lucky; the minutiae of Whitewater will probably join Spiro Agnew trivia in the political junkyard. But the larger question is why the press is content to caricature the South so broadly. For one, it's easy for reporters who grew up with "The Andy Griffith Show," dimly remember reading *All the King's Men* in school, or who have seen *Blaze*, the wonderful Paul Newman movie about Earl Long and his stripper girlfriend. So there is a ready store of conventional wisdom about the South to juice up copy or talk-show comments. The second reason is the one that's more troubling. Laying blame elsewhere deflects attention from Washington, the country's real center of ethical sloppiness in which the press is thoroughly mired; not on the take, perhaps, but marinated in a culture that discourages seeing how business is truly done. Dumping on Little Rock—"that could never happen *here*"—is at best a distraction. And at worst it's protective coloration for the people who schmooze along the Potomac for bigger money and higher stakes. □

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Memo of the Month

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, OHIO

SPECIAL ORDER
GA-21

28 February 1994

The following Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) units, locations indicated, are redesignated as indicated effective 1 March 1994. Assignments remain unchanged. Authority: DAF/PE letter 593r, 25 February 1994, Redesignation of Certain Air Force Materiel Command Units, and AFR 26-2.

Current Designation	Location	New Designation
377th Civil Engineering Squadron	Kirtland AFB NM	377th Civil Engineer Squadron
HQ 645th Civil Engineering Group	Wright-Patterson AFB OH	HQ 645th Civil Engineer Group
645th Civil Engineering Operations Squadron	Wright-Patterson AFB OH	645th Civil Engineer Operations Squadron
645th Civil Engineering Maintenance Squadron	Wright-Patterson AFB OH	645th Civil Engineer Maintenance Squadron
647th Civil Engineering Squadron	Hanscom AFB MA	647th Civil Engineer Squadron
648th Civil Engineering Squadron	Brooks AFB TX	648th Civil Engineer Squadron
649th Civil Engineering Squadron	Hill AFB UT	649th Civil Engineer Squadron
HQ 650th Civil Engineering Group	Edwards AFB CA	HQ 650th Civil Engineer Group
650th Civil Engineering Operations Squadron	Edwards AFB CA	650th Civil Engineer Operations Squadron
650th Civil Engineering Maintenance Squadron	Edwards AFB CA	650th Civil Engineer Maintenance Squadron
651st Civil Engineering Squadron	Kelly AFB TX	651st Civil Engineer Squadron
652nd Civil Engineering Squadron	McClellan AFB CA	652nd Civil Engineer Squadron
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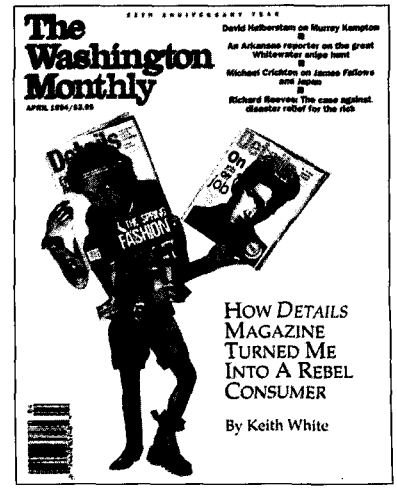

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Who's Who

White House suspicions about **Roger Altman**'s being more concerned with saving his own scalp than with defending the administration are based on two facts. (1) Before Altman recused himself from the RTC's investigation of Madison and Whitewater, he first informed not the White House but **Howell Raines**, the editorial page editor of *The New York Times*. (2) The very-hostile-to-the-Clintons lead story in *Time*'s April 4 issue was written by **Michael Kramer,** for whom Altman is said to have been a friendly source in the past. . . .

If the White House had a journalistic enemies list, by the way, **Raines**, whose page has been consistently severe on **Clinton,** and **Kramer**, whose wife **Kimba Wood** was dumped by the president, would be among its leading members. . . .

Until her impressive April 22 press conference, some of **Hillary Clinton**'s friends were said to be concerned about her mental state. They cited her attempt to stonewall Whitewater, her seemingly paranoid remarks to *Elle* characterizing Whitewater as a plot by the president's enemies, and finally her dismissal of White House usher **Chris Emery** because it was alleged that Emery had leaked confidential information to **Barbara Bush** about the Clintons. But insiders who know how the ushers' office and Mrs. Bush worked together say the relationship definitely did not include dishing-the-dirt intimacy. Of course, if Emery spills Clintonian beans to *The American Spectator*, as some rumors have him doing, then Hillary's suspicions will prove well founded, won't they?...

One White House official offers this possible theory about **Mrs. Clinton**'s cattle futures trading. It is that Springdale, Ark., broker **"Red" Bone** was not trying to do a favor for Hillary but one for **James Blair**, the Tyson lawyer who was one of Bone's best customers. This may be true, of course, but wasn't the net result still a favor from Blair, who represented Arkansas' largest employer, to Hillary and to **Bill**, who was then leading in the polls in his first race for governor? . . .

If this is the case, could **Tyson Foods** still be getting paid off for its help to **Bill** and **Hillary Clinton,** including that nifty investing advice? Less than three months after Clinton became president, reports the Associated Press, aides to Secretary of Agriculture **Mike Espy** ordered the department's food inspectors to halt work on tougher standards for poultry contamination. A year later, no new standards have been imposed. **Tom Devine**, attorney for the Government Accountability Project, says, "There is no question the poultry industry receives favorable treatment compared with its competitors." . . .

Now that **Webster Hubbell** has departed, the **Clinton**'s man inside the Justice Department is said to be **Ron Klain**, a White House lawyer who has been appointed **Janet Reno**'s counselor. . . .

By the way, what we hear about **Hubbell** leaves Who's Who bewildered. On the one hand, very reliable sources tell us that he was highly respected by the career attorneys at the Department of Justice. This would usually be conclusive evidence that he is both a good man and an able attorney. On the other hand, it is alleged that, having maintained he had only "indirect" involvement in the FDIC's case against the Madison S&L, he nevertheless claimed in bills to the government to have worked one 20-day streak without a day off, through three weekends, averaging more than eight hours a day. It appears he is fibbing either about "indirect" or about the hours he worked—or maybe both. . . .

When **Lloyd Cutler** was White House counsel under **Jimmy Carter**, he is said to have kept a close watch on the Department of Justice's possible case against **Billy Carter,** and to have written a memorandum to the president advising Carter on what course Billy should follow to defuse the investigation. According to **Bruce Fein**, a Washington legal writer, the Cutler-to-Carter-to-Billy advice was taken and a criminal prosecution was avoided. Doesn't this mean that Cutler was then acting as Carter's personal counsel, rather than as counsel to the office of the president as he emphasized he would be under Clinton? . . .

Newsweek's April 4 Whitewater story that had to be corrected the following week was said to have been rushed because the magazine editors were in a panic that *Time* was devoting its cover to the **Michael Kramer** Whitewater story for its issue of the same date. . . .

Here's what federal Judge **Harold Greene**, who presided over the trial of **John Poindexter** at which he heard extensive testimony from **Oliver North**, thinks of the Virginia GOP senatorial candidate: "He changed his story from what he had said in the Congress. . . He said some things which to me at least, appeared inherently incredible." . . .

Although **José Cabranes** is being pushed by some Hispanic groups for the Supreme Court, he is not, we are assured, simply a choice for fans of minority set-asides. Two of Who's Who's most respected sources have offered glowing reviews of Cabranes and say that he is a sharp and original thinker. . . .

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Examples of selfless dedication to public service are so rare these days that **George Mitchell**'s decision to pass up **Clinton**'s offer of a seat on the Supreme Court so that he could marshal health reform through Congress deserves wide praise. Now, there are cynics out there contending that Mitchell is simply angling for the baseball commissioner's job, a $1 million-a-year plum that comes with a Manhattan apartment. We, however, are not that jaded. Then again, if Mitchell does take the baseball job before a health bill is passed, the jeering from this corner will be audible from Camden Yards to Candlestick Park. . . .

You remember that Washingtonian **Michael Kinsley** turned down the editorship of *New York* magazine because he hated New York City. Well, **Harold Ickes,** who became White House deputy chief of staff in January, is said to return the sentiment. Ickes, a New Yorker, moved away from Washington as a child with his mother, who was disillusioned by the city's treatment of her after she was widowed by her husband, the late secretary of the Interior. One of Washington's less charming customs is to completely ignore widows and former wives of public officials. . . .

It has been reported that superlobbyist **Tommy Boggs** (see **Jon Meacham**'s article, page 36) has been fined $4,000 for violating federal laws on a Maryland hunting trip during which his party shot 182 ducks that they didn't even bother to collect. . . .

Roy Neel, who left the White House in December to become president of the United States Telephone Association, is carrying out the **Clinton** administration's no-lobbying-by-former-officials pledge in a curious way. In a recent interview, he said, "I plan to work closely with local telephone company executives—and their employees—to make sure that they can find efficient and effective ways to get to know their own elected officials." . . .

Depending on the moment, as practically everyone knows, **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** can be a great man or, sometimes, a lazy, arrogant man. On health care, insiders are whispering that **Moynihan** is sadly being the latter, not yet mastering the issue or pulling his weight in the Senate. . . .

This indication of the White House access enjoyed by **Joshua Steiner**, the Treasury aide whose diary is being eagerly perused by special prosecutor **Robert Fiske**, was buried a few months back in a long article by *The Washington Post*'s **Al Kamen**: "One frustrated senior staffer, who needed **Clinton**'s signature on a document and couldn't seem to get it, recalls turning to Steiner, who went back channel and got the president's sign-off the next day." . . .

You might legitimately ask why Whitewater dominates this column when our editors think it's a snipe hunt. But why the press overplayed the story and why the **Clintons** and **George Stephanopoulos** have reacted to it with such defensive humorlessness [see "Tilting at Windmills," page 4] continues to provide the best gossip in town. To Stephanopoulos' credit, however, it should be noted that he, along with **David Gergen**, **James Carville**, and **Mark Gearan**, recommended a lay-it-all-out-early policy—to which, by the way, the resistance was led by **Hillary Clinton**, **Bernard Nussbaum**, personal lawyer **David Kendall**, and **Bruce Lindsey**. . . .

—*Susan Threadgill*

Roman Genn

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Was There More to "Charlie's Angels" Than Just Jiggle?

A media critic thinks so, and her history of girls in pop culture from the fifties, sixties, and seventies nearly proves it

BY MARJORIE WILLIAMS

Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media
Susan J. Douglas, *Times Books, $23*

It isn't every writer who can defend her discipline in terms as catchy as those of Susan J. Douglas. "If it was important enough to [the media] to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to bring us Mr. Ed, Enjolie perfume. . . and 'Dallas,'" she writes, "then it's important enough for us to figure out why."

For at least half of this lively book, Douglas, a professor of media studies at Hampshire College and media critic for *The Progressive*, makes a good case. One of the great undertakings of academic feminism is to reconstruct and dignify the history lived by women in every age, often scantily recorded or, even where preserved in the private writings of women, accorded little significance by chroniclers of traditional history. It may be a stretch to accord the girls who lip-synched to the Supremes in the sixties and ironed their hair in the seventies the same new respect that has lately been accorded the women of, say, the American frontier. But the best parts of Douglas' book manage to make that stretch.

Douglas wryly notes that elements of male teen culture from the fifties on have been elevated to art, while the pop passions of teenage girls are so much flotsam. As a combination of new technologies and boomer self-involvement brings us endless retrospectives, "What gets looked back on and celebrated as pathbreaking—James Dean, Elvis, the Beatles—are the boys," Douglas writes, whereas "what film and TV recorded girls doing during these years—teasing our hair, chasing the Beatles, and doing the watusi in bikinis—was silly, mindless and irrelevant to history. . . . Girls and women come across as the kitsch of the 1960s—flying nuns, witches, genies, twig-thin models, and go-go boot-clad dancers in cages."

It is the generous mission of *Where the Girls Are* to consider this trashy history in a kinder light, giving us a detailed, often funny look at exactly what messages were contained in all those now-bizarre bottles, from "The Flying Nun" to "Policewoman," and from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* to those annoying quizzes in *Cosmopolitan*.

Douglas claims the bubblegum of her own generation as a culture with a surprisingly nuanced legacy: Despite its ditsy beach bunnies, its ubiquitous douche advertisements, and its micro-mini skirts, it also whispered intermittently of empowerment, of sexual freedom, and of a new future. She makes a spirited argument that the post-1960 pop culture that followed Donna Reed—from "Shindig" to "Bewitched," from *Splendor in the*

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Grass to, yes, even "Charlie's Angels"—contained the seeds of feminism, even if it looked very much like the chalky soil of the status quo. And in the process, she actually manages to explain why it made a weird kind of sense to us that "The Patty Duke Show" featured girls who were identical cousins.

One of the book's best chapters is "Why the Shirelles Mattered," about the "girl groups" which appealed so strongly to adolescent girls: the Dixie Cups, the Shangri-Las, the Chiffons, the Angels, the Supremes. They represented, Douglas argues, one of the few parts of the culture that legitimized the voice of the adolescent girl, that "glamorized and dignified" her anxieties. But beyond that, the music reflected all the tensions—between purity and desire, between passivity and assertiveness, between masochism and aggression—that pulled at teenaged girls. This was just one aspect of sixties culture that presented defiance in an attractive light—right alongside the conformity it also promoted.

I Dream of Empowerment: Did Jeannie help pave the way for feminists?

Moving up to the present, Douglas' book explores how popular media and corporate America learned to capitalize on the women's movement. By the seventies, shows like "Charlie's Angels" were beginning to incorporate the more palatable parts of feminism while still affirming the most traditional "feminine" values. Through the eighties and nineties, the media learned ever-slicker ways of using feminism and female strength as sales tools—while holding up an apolitical and increasingly individualistic, even narcissistic, model of what constituted the New Woman. The concepts of liberation and equality, writes Douglas, "were collapsing into distinctly personal, private desires" for achievement and physical perfection, as represented in ads for everything from hair dye ("I'm worth it") to the exercise videotape *Buns of Steel.*

I couldn't help feeling, as the book went along, that it might not be a good idea to stop and think *too* hard about what I was reading. Do I really need to know why "Charlie's Angels" was a more socially constructive influence than "The Bionic Woman"? (Hint: The angels did it without phony extra-human skills, and could be construed as offering a faint—a *very* faint—argument that sisterhood is powerful.) And while I like Douglas for admitting her addiction to "Dallas," I'm proud to say that I can admit to the same thing without falling back on the defense that it was really Sue Ellen Ewing's implied critique of patriarchy that drew me in. I knew Douglas had overdosed on old videotapes when I came across this sentence: "'I Dream of Jeannie' differed from 'Bewitched' in crucial ways that already suggested a backlash against the earlier show's discourse of empowerment."

There's such a thing as retrieving pop culture a mite too emphatically from the trivia heap. And it must be said that Douglas plows, in passing, some very well-worked ground. The reader doesn't really need reminders that "The public activism of young people was one of the biggest ongoing stories of 1968."

But for anyone who has some compassion for the teenager who lives on in her memory, there's value in at least pausing to consider the messages that have bombarded young American women. It *is* interesting to remember that the mid-sixties, the time when the women's movement was about to take shape, saw a rash of hit shows that included female witchcraft or magic: the aforementioned "Bewitched" and "I Dream of Jeannie," as well as

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"The Munsters" and "The Addams Family," all of which Douglas sees as offering some effort either to explore or to contain the gathering force of female dissatisfaction. And the retro symbolism of "Jeannie" is, in hindsight, staggering: As Douglas notes, the "master" for whom the airheaded Jeannie makes trouble is that ultimate symbol of sixties male authority: an astronaut.

Women may especially enjoy Douglas' fine exegesis of the key concept of perkiness, as exemplified by "Gidget" and "The Patty Duke Show" ("Here we had teenaged girls possessed by an almost virulent strain of perkiness"). It was "an absolutely critical mask for girls who wanted to take an active role in the world yet still be thought of as appealing. . . It was usually 'perkiness'—assertiveness masquerading as cuteness—that provided the middle ground they needed to get their way and get male approval, two goals which were often mutually exclusive."

She also explores the ways in which the news media covered the reality of the women's movement. There's some valuable material here: We probably can't be reminded too often of the sheer hostility that greeted feminism, or how recently news heavyweights tended to respond with chuckling on-air comments about how long it would take the army to mobilize if women were to be drafted ("At least one-half the regiment could simply never be ready on time," snickered ABC's Frank Reynolds in 1970). The more significant point is that coverage of the women's movement continued to divide women against themselves, validating a part of the message (women probably should get equal pay, male opinion leaders would say reasonably) and then acting as if these economic pieces of the women's agenda could be neatly severed from the domestic and sexual parts, all the while reviling the messengers as radical, unnatural whiners. It was this deft surgery, Douglas argues, that gave rise to the great defensive female mantra of the eighties and nineties: "I'm not a feminist, but. . ."

Sadly, though, the value of Douglas' book declines with every step she takes away from the pop culture of the sixties and seventies. The book loses its focus and becomes a rack on which the author hangs an assortment of gripes with the media, corporate America, and anti-feminism in general. The note of analytic fondness gives way to a sweeping, almost sophomoric anger, distinguished by arguments every bit as sloppy as those she accuses her targets of. For example, she huffs, *a propos* of Hillary Clinton's being forced to bake cookies during the '92 campaign, that America is "the most conservative industrialized nation on the globe," which suggests that she hasn't lately given much thought to the status of women in, say, Japan.

Douglas' writing is weirdly inconsistent: Informal and witty in its best passages, it is in others downright cloying. On the sexual revolution she observes that "Most young women. . . in the early and mid-1960s still kept their undies on until they were married." And women, she writes, "are really getting the fed-up-skis" over advertisers' obsessions with youth.

But there was a deeper reason for the dyspepsia I felt when I closed this book: As a professor of media studies, Douglas tends to see everything as a function of media behavior. One problem with this point of view is the familiar curse of Boomer Solipsism: Like others of her generation, Douglas tends to write as if only the mass media of the second half of the 20th century ever had a molding influence on their audiences. This is the mindset that decries the poor role models in Disney movies without mentioning that our great-grandparents knew some of the same powerful archetypes from the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen.

Beyond that, however, is the more troubling assumption that we lead our lives exclusively in reaction to the messages we receive from the media. While Douglas probably wouldn't literally make that argument, it's implied in much of her work. One of the mass media's main legacies for American women, she writes, has been "the erosion of anything resembling a unified self. Presented with an array of media archetypes, and given morality tales in which we identify first with one type, then another. . . women have grown accustomed to compartmentalizing ourselves into a whole host of personas which we occupy simultaneously."

Well, sure. But it isn't *only* the mass media that lure women into the fragmentation of self. There's also. . . life. Teachers and parents, lovers and friends. Douglas's outlook forgets the larger truth that integrating one's warring wants and selves is the task that every woman (and man) faces. And ultimately, it confers on the media a power they would never dare claim for themselves, suggesting that if only pop culture could fashion the image of a whole woman—Maude without the stridency, Mary Tyler Moore without the self-abasement—we'd have all the problems of female identity licked. □

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Self-Regarding Henry

In his bid to write a tome for the ages, Henry Kissinger has penned an apologia for his years in power

BY JOHN MORTON BLUM

Diplomacy
Henry Kissinger, *Simon & Schuster, $35*

In *Diplomacy*, Henry Kissinger has written another long, weighty, and important book. Swollen to more than 910 pages, some two kilograms of European heft, replete with controversial advice for current or future pursuit and with analyses of strategies suitable or mistaken in the past, it will command an audience of policy wonks. They will find the Kissinger they know—assertive, arrogant, disdainful of his critics, in favor of an imperial presidency and of tough diplomacy, impatient with Congress and the people. Though he dedicates the book to the men and women of the Foreign Service, he faults bureaucracy on several alleged accounts: for impeding innovative policies; for a tendency to avoid decisions by picking a middle course; for taking a segmented rather than holistic view of policy.

In the busy environment of Washington, readers will be tempted to turn at once to the last chapter, the repository of counsel for immediate and future use. They will learn enough there (though without surprises for Kissinger connoisseurs) to equip themselves for intelligent conversation about author and book alike. But even the busy should try to resist the temptation. A learned man, Kissinger is also an authority on diplomacy, a subject he has studied much of his life and practiced in the light of his conclusions. This book reveals the historical sources and contemporary vectors of his thinking. Therein lies its gravitas.

Kissinger writes in a tradition old for Europe but only recently established in the United States, by George Kennan and Walter Lippmann in particular, both of whom he frequently cites in support of his own views. Like Lippmann in several of his later books, and like Kennan in his *American Diplomacy*, Kissinger does not write as a historian but as a pamphleteer using history to make his case. Kennan, of course, did both, but Kissinger is too much the controversialist to spend his energy in research for the purpose of recapturing the past as it probably was. *Diplomacy* offers no evidence of

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sustained or disinterested scholarship. Rather, Kissinger seems to have written a draft about European and American diplomats, subjects familiar to him, in order that his readers may draw lessons Kissinger thinks appropriate. Then he had his research staff provide a sparse documentation for his interpretations.

Kissinger's use of history elucidates his familiar diplomacy. As he sees it, geopolitical realities define national interests. Men in power then make decisions that govern relations among states. Those who are wise protect and advance their national interests by practicing a balance of power diplomacy enhanced, when possible, by the common values, cultural and moral, of necessary allies. Kissinger methodically, at times ponderously, builds an historical structure to sustain those generalities. The figures with whom he identifies invariably act as if they had been he. They succeed. The others do not.

He associates himself with men whose strategies he deems still vital for diplomacy. So we visit with Cardinal Richelieu, who first formulated the concept of *raison d'etat*—the primacy of the interests of the state; with William III of Britain, who devised the system of the balance of power; with Benjamin Disraeli and Winston Churchill, who taught their reluctant countrymen to keep a hand in Europe. Disraeli and Churchill's leadership, Kissinger holds, "reflected a geopolitical fact of life"—the potential danger to Britain, "an island off the coast of Europe," if all the resources of the continent were arrayed against it. The United States now, Kissinger contends, is an island off the coast of Eurasia and must act accordingly.

In engineering the rise of Prussia, Otto von Bismarck, with whom Kissinger especially identifies, practiced a diplomacy that required political control which military chiefs later usurped; restraint which his German successors lacked; and flexibility which became incompatible with "an age of mass public opinion." Kissinger, for his part, also distrusts both the people and the politicians who use them.

Fundamentally a European intelligence, Kissinger falters when his narrative moves, in 1917, to the United States, which he persists in calling "America," perhaps in deference to his simplistic assertion of the country's hegemony throughout the western hemisphere. He derides Woodrow Wilson for what Kissinger defines as a naive belief in the goodness of man, the related harmony of the world, and the resulting faith in a concert of powers to preserve peace by reliance on the moral force of opinion.

While praising Franklin Roosevelt for his insights about foreign affairs and for his leadership, Kissinger makes FDR appear more Wilsonian than he actually was. For example, Kissinger overlooks FDR's effort to tilt the balance of power in both Europe and Asia by recognizing the Soviet Union in 1933. More important, he criticizes FDR for assuming a community of interests that did not exist among the Four Policemen, the powers he expected to preserve the postwar peace. Roosevelt, Kissinger holds, was returning to an unrealistic Wilsonian hope for a concert of powers. But there is a strong case for viewing FDR's proposal as an implicit recognition of spheres of influence, though Roosevelt never considered Eastern Europe as part of a Soviet sphere. Further, Roosevelt's wartime strategy left the United States with sole possession of the atom bomb and with a ring of global bases which the Air Force deemed essential for an attack, if one became necessary, on the Soviet Union. Consequently, Moscow had reason to wonder about American intentions, though Kissinger dismisses that possibility as part of a deluded, "psychiatric" interpretation of the Cold War, a fantasy of Henry Wallace and others like him.

Foreign Pol

In Kissinger's account, Stalin bore exclusive responsibility for the onset of the Cold War. He believes that the United States should have used its monopoly on the atom bomb to deter Soviet expansion in Europe. But how? When Secretary of State Byrnes rattled the bomb, Molotov shrugged him off—an episode Kissinger ignores. Would Kissinger have used the bomb? No—he makes it clear that once the Soviet Union had its own arsenal, nuclear war became unthinkable. Nonetheless, he derides the disarmament experts of the 1970s, whose advice he discounted at the time, as theologians whose work was marginal to the real tasks of diplomacy.

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In Kissinger's ideal world, statesmen would manage foreign policy without the interference of public opinion or domestic politics. He is quaintly nostalgic for the days of Bismarck.

And like Bismarck, he often makes sense. With the advantage of hindsight, Kissinger suggests the United States could have won the war in Korea by stopping MacArthur's advance at the thin neck of the peninsula and neutralizing much of the area to the north. He recognizes that the formation of NATO left "two military alliances and two spheres of influence" dividing Europe. In the early days of the Cold War, American strategy was still encumbered by Wilsonian principles. Truman and his successors employed a rhetoric of fear, which Kissinger neglects, to build public support for the time and treasure necessary for containment (this rhetoric also underlay McCarthyism, a factor Kissinger also fails to reckon with). Americans sought total victory over the Soviets instead of accepting, as Churchill did, peaceful coexistence, i.e., detente—Kissinger's own objective when his time came.

Scott Gordley

As he sees it, Khrushchev's recklessness brought on the crises that exposed the weaknesses of messianic American assumptions. Suez revealed that the interests of the United States and its European allies were not always congruent, and it left the United States with responsibility for preserving the balance of power in the Middle East, as in the rest of the world. Europe could thereafter play a major role, as Konrad Adenauer said at the time, only if it united. And in spite of their talk of liberation, with the revolution in Hungary, "American leaders were not willing to risk American lives for a cause which. . . involved no direct American security." Encouraged by Suez and Hungary, Khrushchev tested American resolve in Berlin and tried to bypass containment by adventuring in the Third World. Then followed the fiasco at the Bay of Pigs and the embarrassment over Berlin that, in Kissinger's opinion, provoked Kennedy to seek compensation in Vietnam, where the United States had already engaged its grandeur.

Once he reaches Vietnam, and especially after he gets to his own years in high office, Kissinger's narrative and his accompanying analyses become self-serving. A proper geopolitical approach would have precluded intervention in Vietnam, he observes, though the United States needed to draw the line somewhere in the region to stop communist expansion there. But he knows that Soviet and Chinese interests in the region were in conflict. Why not let them balance each other? Instead, he suggests the line should have been drawn at Malaya or Thailand, or at worst later by Kennedy in Laos. Why then fight on after 1968, the year Kissinger and Nixon came to power? Thailand at least was then out-

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side communist control. Because by then, according to Kissinger, national honor was at stake; Nixon had to arrange an "honorable extrication." But the terms Nixon and Kissinger eventually accepted in 1973 did not really improve on those Averell Harriman had come to in 1968. Why five more years of war? Why the bombing and invasion of Cambodia, with the dreadful ensuing disaster there? Here Kissinger still fails adequately to answer the charges of William Shawcross, the British journalist who blamed much of the genocide that ensued in Cambodia on Kissinger's policies.

Instead, he offers some bizarre retrospections. For one, that Lyndon Johnson should have run in 1968 to force a referendum on his policy in Vietnam. But what kind of referendum does Kissinger think domestic politics would have allowed in 1968? He sees the antiwar movement as a kind of conspiracy against him and Nixon, a conspiracy of radical youth abetted by a cowardly academia and establishment. He seems unaware that generational issues, cultural differences, and especially the civil rights movement would have disrupted national tranquility even in the absence of Vietnam. After all, the Students for a Democratic Society had criticized American nuclear policy and American adventurism while Kissinger was still a college professor, long before Vietnam became a major issue.

Kissinger's use of history is too selective to be convincing. So is his memory, as former members of his staff might attest. Readers may conclude that "the arrogance of power," as Senator Fulbright used that phrase, is matched only by the arrogance of Kissinger.

Nixon and Kissinger deserve much credit for the geopolitics they defined and for the balance of power they achieved in the opening to China and in détente with the Soviet Union. But Kissinger replies to none of the telling criticisms of Raymond Gartoff and others about his and Nixon's exaggerated claims of Soviet involvement in the sundry crises they perceived—in Cuba, in Chile, in the Yom Kippur War, in the war between India and Pakistan. He does not even apologize for his own wiretaps—his own invasions, let alone Nixon's, of the privacy of his staff. Watergate remains for him largely a regrettable interference with the management of foreign policy. In this account he offers essentially the hoary asseverations of his memoirs.

Kissinger's partisanship undermines his treatment of the Reagan and Bush years. He concedes that Reagan "treated biblical references to Armageddon as operational predictions," but he finds Reagan's foreign policy one of "extraordinary consistency and relevance." That assessment depends on Kissinger's interpretation of Reagan's truculent moralism—his special use of human rights—as a pragmatic tactic to induce the overthrow of communism and the democratization of the Soviet Union. Kissinger's reading also depends upon crediting Reagan's arms buildup with precipitating the collapse of the Soviet Union. Perhaps, but internal economic and social problems, and unrealistic efforts at external expansion, would probably in themselves have led to Soviet implosion. Further, those subjected to communist rule in the Soviet Union and in the satellite nations discovered how precious were their human rights without lectures from Washington.

About George Bush Kissinger has little to say. He condemned Anthony Eden for demonizing Nasser; he does not mention Bush's demonizing Noriega and Saddam Hussein. And he accepts Bush's moralism as necessary for selling the Gulf War, with its protection of the national interest in oil. He avoids criticism of American arms aid to Iraq before the invasion of Kuwait by not discussing it. Nevertheless, he argues, multilateralism cannot keep the peace. Since the

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United Nations lacks the means and the will for that essential task, it cannot serve as a substitute for great-power diplomacy. But more than Kissinger allows, the U.N. provides a forum where small nations can express their objections to the conceits of the great powers. Those discussions may not at once temper great power policies, but over time they can help to create the kind of moral climate that Woodrow Wilson considered the hope for the future. Kissinger does not calculate the value of that influence or the expense of losing it.

Indeed, in his general discussion of American policy during the Cold War, not the least during the Reagan presidency, Kissinger never tallies the total cost. It was not just dollars, not just lives, American and others. There were enormous costs also in distortions of the economy, in the underfunding and postponement of needed programs for social justice, in resulting social unrest, in victimization and resentment of peoples on every continent affected by American intrusions.

Though he calculates no such potential costs in looking toward the future, his concluding chapter makes significant observations. As he says, "vast global forces" now at work "will render the United States less exceptional" than Americans have long believed. Power is becoming more diffuse. The nation must tailor its obligations to fit its means for discharging them. Wilsonianism is less and less practical. Not all disputes are justiciable. Ethnic self-determination does not deserve unqualified support, nor do human rights. The interests of the state demand precedence in foreign policy, and they can be served best by flexible applications of the principles of the balance of power, q.e.d.

Kissinger and Tell

Kissinger's applications of those sound conclusions to current problems are more controversial than are the conclusions themselves. He warns that, because a market economy is a long way off in Russia and some communists remain strong there, the United States should be wary about its aid and ties to any Russian regime. So he is critical of President Clinton's support for Yeltsin and recent suggestions for the Partnership for Peace. Kissinger is prepared to risk a confrontation with Russia that Clinton seems eager to avoid. And Kissinger has little to say about the urgency of nuclear disarmament. As he long has, he remains solicitous of China's sensitivities and is less concerned about human rights violations there.

Kissinger ends on an incontrovertible note. The United States will experience only futility and disillusionment if its foreign policy rests on messianic hopes. The essence of diplomacy is not goals but process: "Peace, stability, progress, and freedom. . . will have to be sought in a journey that has no end." That will not come as news to the Clinton administration. As National Security Advisor Anthony Lake recently said at Yale University, the NSC is already trying to avoid both optimism and pessimism in its approach to global problems.

Some of these problems, especially but not exclusively those spawned by demographic and ecological changes, lie wholly outside of Kissinger's historical and contemporary range. There are grave weaknesses in this new tome he has produced. Though Kissinger understands the responsibility of power, he focuses too much on politics and "great men." His use of history is too selective to be convincing. So is his memory, as former members of his staff might attest. In those ways he is less than forthright with his readers. Many of them may conclude that "the arrogance of power," as Senator Fulbright used that phrase, is matched only by the arrogance of Kissinger. He is his own Hegelian Hero. That is the inescapable message implicit in this book. □

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Political Booknotes

The Serpent on the Staff
Howard Wolinsky and Tom Brune
Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, $24.95
By Jeffrey H. Birnbaum

President Clinton has been pretty tough on lobbyists. In 1992, he promised to break their "stranglehold" on Washington, and one of his first acts as president was to ban his appointees from lobbying their agencies for five years after they leave government. Now Clinton is pressing for campaign finance and lobbying disclosure reforms that have a decent chance of passing.

But what he is not doing is ending the influence of influence peddlers. To the contrary, in many important ways, Washington is even more lobbyist-friendly now than it was when Clinton came to town.

One of the great truths of life in the capital is that change in any form creates more business for lobbyists. And Bill Clinton is stirring the pot hard and fast in a way that is especially profitable for the lobbying industry. Clinton is an activist president who believes in an activist government. This combination means big-paying corporate clients have a lot more to fight for—and to protect themselves against—and that translates into more work for lobbyists.

Take the president's health care legislation. Conceptually, it is as populist a proposal as has been floated in years. One of its chief aims is to provide health coverage for the 37 million Americans who aren't covered now. But to do so, some of the nation's richest and most powerful interests, such as drug companies and physicians, will have to change. As a result, health care is likely to be the most lobbied bill in history.

Even the anti-lobbying president knows this and, despite his rhetoric, is including lobbyists in his plans. He put three former lobbyists in his cabinet. And like previous presidents, Clinton has an entire division of his White House devoted entirely to keeping lobbyists, and the interests they represent, in line. It's called the Office of Public Liaison. One of this department's chief targets this year, as in almost any other year, is the nearly 300,000-member American Medical Association (AMA).

The AMA is the subject of an informative new book called *The Serpent on the Staff*, by *Chicago Sun-Times* reporters Howard Wolinsky and Tom Brune. The authors start off with a promising—and interesting—depiction of the way the AMA got and holds onto its influence in Washington. Unfortunately, this line of analysis dissipates as the book moves along. Where it does continue, it relies too heavily on campaign contributions as its basis; there is much more to the doctors' lobby than that.

Still, *The Serpent on the Staff* opens another window on the way interest groups work in Washington, and that always brings a welcome breeze.

The title is a reference to the AMA logo, the ancient symbol for medicine: a snake twined around a knotty staff. The phrase also conveys the authors' sense that all is not well with the politics of the AMA. From their point of view, the association does not lobby for the interests of patients or medicine in general but for the personal interests of doctors. That, they point out, is a big-money business indeed.

The Clinton administration struggled mightily to work with—or around—this major league lobby. At first, the Clintons courted the AMA; Hillary Rodham Clinton even addressed one of its meetings. But in the end, the AMA became just another special-interest road block, repeating its long established pattern of opposition to reform which began when Theodore Roosevelt first proposed national health care only to find America's doctors furiously opposed.

In the old days, this hostility was enough to kill almost every attempt at health reform. The one exception was Medicare in the 1960s. This lobbyist-savvy White House is now trying to make a second exception out of the Clinton health care plan. It is doing so by trying to divide the medical establishment against itself in order to defeat it. This is a thoroughly modern strategy that takes advantage of the increasingly diverse lobbying world of Washington.

The Serpent on the Staff makes a brief but telling mention of this effort. In December 1993, it notes, Clinton held an event at the White House to counter the AMA. At the rally, 10 doctors' organizations, representing more physicians than the AMA's membership, expressed their

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support for the Clinton plan. One official, Rosi Sweeney of the American Academy of Family Physicians, noted, "The AMA doesn't speak for the entire medical community."

In a wider context, the story of the Clinton White House and the AMA is typical of contemporary interest-group politics. Indeed, while the president is likely to complain about lobbyists and "special interests" from time to time, behind the scenes he is careful to work closely with them. Lobbying is a permanent and pervasive force and, in many ways, is key to the outcome of any piece of legislation, especially one as big and important as an overhaul of the entire health care system.

Another example of this is Clinton's fight with the insurance industry. By all outward appearances, Bill and Hillary Clinton could not dislike any industry more. The First Couple has railed against insurance company greed and blustered about its bloated bureaucracy. But back at the White House War Room, it is well understood that there are good insurance companies and bad insurance companies. Some—the five largest ones—actually like the bulk of the Clinton plan. But mid-size insurers don't, and they are funding the famous "Harry and Louise" commercials that have caused the Clintons such grief.

Another reason that the White House must keep track of what interest groups and their lobbyists are doing is communication. One of the Clintons' biggest problems in selling their health plan has been that groups like the Health Insurance Association of America and the AMA have done a better job than the White House in defining what Americans think of the proposal.

In any case, learning more about what lobbies do, and how the White House reacts to them, is an important part of understanding how laws are made and implemented. *The Serpent on the Staff* is a helpful addition to this quest, and nowhere more so than with this fact: "Not only does the AMA have one of the biggest-spending PACs in the country, but it also owns the building that houses the only federal agency charged with monitoring PACs and campaign contributions"—the Federal Election Commission.

Jeffrey H. Birnbaum covers the White House for The Wall Street Journal *and is the author of* The Lobbyists: How Influence Peddlers Work Their Way in Washington.

The Confirmation Mess

Stephen L. Carter

Basic Books, $20

By Ross K. Baker

Stephen L. Carter has received much favorable attention lately for his book *The Culture of Disbelief*, a lament over the disappearance of religion from American political discourse. The country's most prominent Protestant layman, Bill Clinton, bought Carter's book in Martha's Vineyard last summer, kept it near his desk in the Oval Office, and mentioned it on several occasions. But it is always difficult to find out whether presidents actually read the books they conspicuously talk about. I remember a story that James MacGregor Burns told about meeting with Jimmy Carter after the president had publicly praised Burns' book on leadership. In the course of the conversation, it became quite clear to the author that Carter either had not read the book or (perhaps worse) that the president had read it but totally missed the point. This is an enduring problem, for to be known as a reader of writers such as Reinhold Neibuhr, John Rawls, or Robert Nozick seems to make politicians feel that they are men of many parts. I once worked for a senator who was asked what his favorite novel was. *The Best and the Brightest*, he replied.

When a book receives a president's public endorsement, however, it tends to be taken fairly seriously because there is an assumption that it might influence his policies. Stephen Carter's newest book, *The Confirmation Mess*, will probably not be the subject of any public praise by Clinton since it is highly critical of the way presidents choose and package their nominees for high posts. And Carter reserves even more severe criticism for the way the Senate confirms or rejects those nominees.

Prominent in Carter's catalog of flaws in a nomination/confirmation system that has produced debacles such as the Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas hearings and the serial executions of the nominations of Zoe Baird, Kimba Wood, and Lani Guinier is the system's current presumption that a presidential nominee should, by and large, be guaranteed Senate confirmation. This school of thought holds that presidents deserve "their own team."

Yet Carter advises that we turn this presumption of confirmation on its head and instead force nominees to tell us why they are qualified. It is an intriguing thought, but would make it difficult for presidents to pay off their big contributors with ambassadorships to Barbados, Costa Rica, Ireland, and the Court of Saint James. It would have spelled doom for Harry Truman's nomination of Perle Mesta to Luxembourg and thus deprived us of the basis for a great musical comedy, Irving Berlin's *Call Me Madam*.

Carter's concern, however, is not so much with ambassadors or even cabinet nominees so much as it is with Supreme Court justices. Had he stuck with those alone and not gotten into the Lani Guinier affair, the book would have had a more consistent point to make.

Despite Carter's underlying argument that a single seat on the Supreme Court is not so all-fired important that the lobbies of the right and left need to put out a *fatwa* on nominees they don't like, an associate justiceship still counts for a good

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deal more than, let us say, the job of secretary of Labor. Every survey of public attitudes on the prestige of public officials rates federal judges well above cabinet members. And besides, cabinet members are now little more than sublimated errand-boys for the interest groups. A single justice can become a swing vote in the manner of a Lewis F. Powell, so it is the most natural thing in the world for those with a stake in public policy to pick holes in a nominee's robe. But it is quite a different thing, as Carter says, to depict the nominee as the devil incarnate, as happened with Robert Bork and, at the sub-cabinet level, with Guinier.

Carter's even-handedness in casting the conservative Bork and the liberal Guinier as victims of the same lynch mob psychology makes his argument especially appealing since it appears that he has no axe of his own to grind. But I found one bit of rationalizing he does on behalf of his fellow law professors unpersuasive. He argues that the writings of academics nominated to high office should not be taken too seriously. Both Bork and Guinier had written extensively, and in both cases, their scholarly works came back to haunt them. Taking provocative academic writings into account in the nomination process, he tells us, deters intellectual risk-taking on the part of professors who might some day aspire to government service. My own advice to a law professor who is thinking about pulling his punches in a law review article because a senator might one day brandish it in front of him at a confirmation hearing is that you can't have it both ways. You cannot simultaneously relish the exhilaration of intellectual playfulness and enjoy the sober respectability that makes for a credible case for confirmation.

The author devotes little time to the one element in today's confirmation process that seems to me to be intimately connected with the savagery that nominees must confront: the media and the controversies—often contrived—on which they thrive. While it has become tiresomely routine to blame journalists for every infirmity in American society, we should not overlook the vested interest that they have in presenting people in the most provocative, even extreme, manner. As to the other villains in the confirmation mess—presidents who make cavalier choices and then suffer their hapless nominees to hang in the wind; senators who shamelessly rag on appointees in order to score points with interest groups—Carter is, in my view, a little too charitable. He concentrates on perfecting a process that is not intrinsically flawed but which has fallen into the wrong hands.

In the manner of good-government advocates from time immemorial, Carter discusses a number of possible remedies to correct a process that has degenerated into an ideological food fight. These correctives range from the unlikely (requiring a supermajority vote in the Senate for confirmation that would force presidents to nominate only those around whom a consensus could form) to the impossible (a return to the pre-1925 system of having nominees not testify at their own confirmation hearings).

Unlike the reformist tinkerers, Carter sensibly rejects these quick fixes in favor of a more radical and vastly more difficult solution given our thirst for judicial blood: Stop using confirmations to encode the Supreme Court for all time with our ideological genetics. Instead, trust that the decisions of nine Americans of more than ordinary integrity will probably not be too wide of the mark for too long. Carter's appeal to our common sense and good grace may strike some as impractical. It strikes me as the very midsummer of wisdom.

Ross K. Baker is a professor of political science at Rutgers University.

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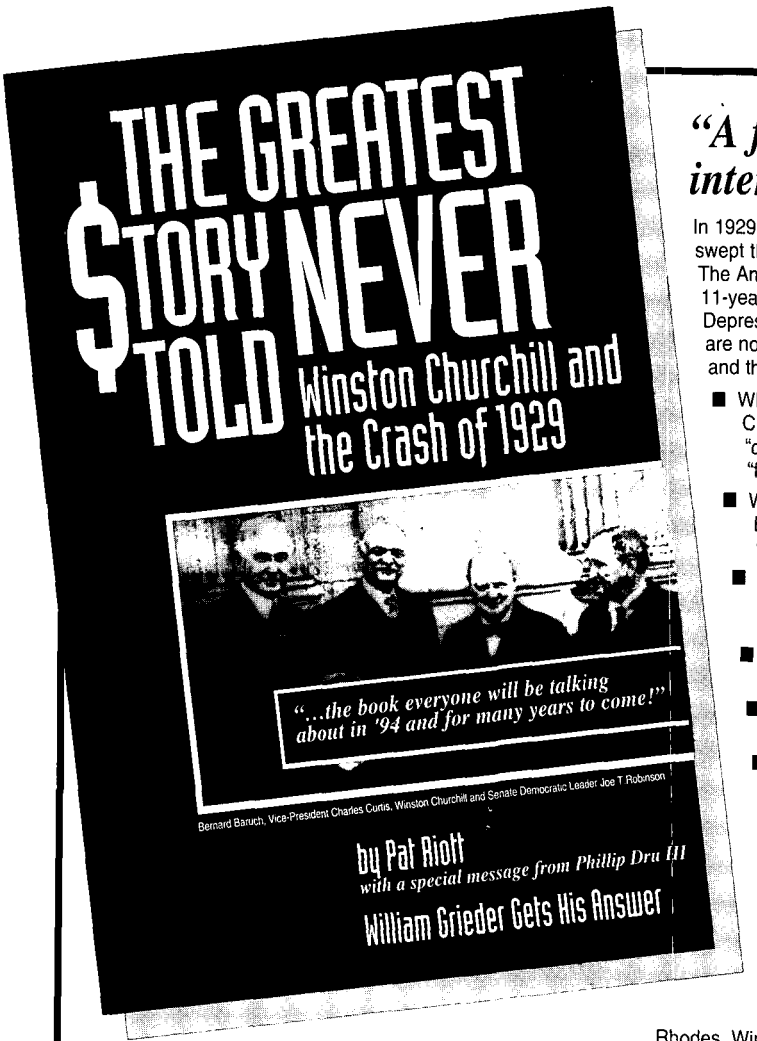

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